00020074

NOT TO
OUT OF

BOMBAY BRANCH
OF THE
ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY.
TOWN HALL, BOMBAY.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 26 June, 2018

LIVES OF LORD CASTLEREAGH

AND

SIR CHARLES STEWART

THE

SECOND AND THIRD MARQUESSES OF LONDONDERRY

WITH ANNALS OF CONTEMPORARY EVENTS IN WHICH THEY BORE A PART

FROM THE ORIGINAL PAPERS OF THE FAMILY

BY

IR ARCHIBALD ALISON, BART.

D.C.L. LL.D. ETC.

AUTHOR OF THE "HISTORY OF EUROPE," ETC.

20074 a

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. I.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS

EDINBURGH AND LONDON

MDCCCLXI

00020074

PREFACE.

THE slightest examination of the following pages must be sufficient to convince every one that it has been constructed on a different principle from any of the numerous biographies of eminent men which have recently issued from the press, and partakes in many parts more of the character of general history than personal narrative. This plan was not adopted without consideration, and the reason of it was this:—

That the principal object of history is the narrative of events—of biography, the delineation of character,—is a common observation, which, in the general case, is undoubtedly well-founded. But in its application to particular instances it requires considerable modification. If the interest of a character consists in the genius by which its productions have been distinguished, or the vigour by which its thoughts have been expressed, no narrative of surrounding events is required, and any such would be misplaced. Every one would regret a page given to contemporary events in the biography of Michael Angelo, Tasso, Newton, or Johnson; but it is

otherwise with statesmen or warriors who have become celebrated, not for the brilliancy of their imagination, the justice of their thoughts, or the energy of their expressions, but for the great public events in which they have borne a part. The biography of such men is to be found in the narrative of the national changes to which they contributed, and a mere personal narrative would convey no sort of idea, either of their real character or the importance of their actions upon the fortunes of mankind. What would the lives of Alexander be without the graphic account in Quintus Curtius of the passage of the Granicus or the battle of Arbela? Cæsar's Commentaries would not have remained to this day the admiration of ages if they had not contained full details of the Gallic and civil wars; and no Life of Napoleon, Wellington, or Marlborough, has the least chance of being permanently read if it does not supply full details of their military exploits. Lord Castlereagh and Sir Charles Stewart have weighed too powerfully on the course of contemporary events to permit of a faithful portrait of their lives being presented but by a narrative of the public consequences of their actions.

Such a narrative was, in an especial manner, called for on account of another circumstance. Both having espoused the anti-popular side in domestic politics, and stood forth as the most formidable antagonists of the movement party both at home and abroad, have been exposed to a greater amount of public obloquy than usually falls to the lot of those who, like them, prefer the discharge of public duty to the earning of temporary popularity. While this obloquy long injured their repu-

tation at home, it was indirectly assailed by a numerous party abroad, who sought to represent the overthrow of Napoleon as the result of a general popular movement, of which the great body of mankind were entitled to the whole credit, while hardly any was to be assigned to the courage and ability of individual men, how elevated soever their sphere of action. This opinion has been so generally diffused that it has passed, in a manner, into an axiom. Yet is it in some respects erroneous. The world, indeed, rose up in arms after the French Revolution; but it was for long rather to support than resist the domination of France; and of the 1,500,000 warriors who, in 1813, were in arms in Europe, 900,000 drew the sword for Napoleon. The Power which could give its followers £1,200,000,000 sterling in contributions and plunder during twenty years, had no difficulty in drawing the multitude after it. It was not till it began to decline that the multitude fell off and ranged themselves on the other side. The reaction was then great and powerful; but the utmost it could at first do was to equal the action. The defence was equal to the attack, but no more; and it was the equal balance of these opposite forces which gave such importance to the actions of their respective leaders. It was the strenuous efforts of individual men sustaining and directing the acts of the masses on their side, which first caused the tide to turn and gave permanent success to the arms of freedom. The more the latest and best informed works on the subject—those of Thiers, Sir George Cathcart, Sir Robert Wilson, Marshal Marmont, Baron Muffling, General Koch, and Sir Charles

Stewart—are studied, the more clearly will this appear, and the more evident will it be that, in recent as well as ancient times, there is much truth in the opinion of Sallust, that it was the "strenuous virtue of a *few citizens*" which has done everything, and thus it was that poverty conquered riches, few men numbers."

In detailing the influence of the two brothers, who form the object of this biography, on the course of public events, it seemed indispensable to narrate these events fully, and make *no reference to any other works.* This is a rule which authors and reviewers familiar with the subject, and surrounded with the books relating to it, are sometimes apt to forget. They think it enough to refer to public events as narrated in some other collective or general work, and deem it repetition to say anything of it in their own pages, forgetting that these authorities are not accessible to one in a hundred of their probable readers, and that what future times desire in a historical or biographical work is not merely detached narratives of particular events or personal incidents, however descriptive of character; but, in addition, such a complete story as will *supersede the necessity of referring, for ordinary purposes, to any other narrative on the subject.* No biography or history has the least chance of surviving, except as a book of reference, which is not constructed on this principle; and though the Author is far from anticipating any exception to the general fate of such productions for these Memoirs, yet he is persuaded that it is thus that every lasting biography of this nature must be framed.

The loss of a large, and perhaps the most valuable, part

of the Castlereagh Papers on the voyage to India with the gentleman to whose care they had been intrusted for the compilation of a biography, has immensely augmented the labour of this work, by leaving only in many places fragments of correspondence, without the connecting links or relative answers. Enough, however, remains in the Castlereagh and Londonderry archives to bring out in a clear light the character of both the eminent men to whom it relates, and establish the importance of their public acts on an imperishable basis. The Author seizes this opportunity of expressing his deep gratitude to the present Marchioness, Frances Anne, as well as to the Marquess of Londonderry, for the liberality and kindness with which they have put the invaluable treasures in their possession at his disposal, and his regret that the plan of his work, and the necessary limits within which it required to be kept, has prevented him from laying a still greater number of them before the public.

A. ALISON.

POSSIL HOUSE, *October* 15, 1861.

CONTENTS OF VOL. I.

CHAPTER I.

LINEAGE AND EARLY LIFE OF LORD CASTLEREAGH AND SIR CHARLES STEWART —IRISH REBELLION AND UNION.

§		Page
1.	Lineage of the Londonderry family,	1
2.	Family of the first Marquess,	2
3.	Character of the two brothers in childhood,	3
4.	Striking anecdote of Charles Stewart,	3
5.	He enters the army in 1791,	4
6.	Superior interest of military to civil biography,	6
7.	Character of the first Lord Londonderry,	6
8.	Noble anecdote of Lord Castlereagh on Strangford Lough,	8
9.	His early life at Cambridge,	9
10.	His travels abroad, and first parliamentary contest,	10
11.	Severe parliamentary contest in the county of Down,	12
12.	Lord Castlereagh enters the militia, and marries the daughter of the Earl of Buckinghamshire,	16
13.	His declaration in favour of Reform,	17
14.	His debut in the Irish Parliament,	18
15.	Dangers of Ireland in 1793, and Lord Castlereagh's views on it,	19
16.	Lord Castlereagh's views on the subject,	20
17, 18.	Lord Castlereagh's views of the French war in 1793,	21, 22
19.	Value of the political opinions expressed in these letters,	23
20, 21.	Lord Castlereagh's views of affairs in Ireland in 1794,	24, 25
22.	Changes in the Irish Government at this period, and appointment of Lords Westmoreland and Fitzwilliam,	26
23.	Lord Fitzwilliam's liberal policy and his dismissal; succeeded by Lord Camden,	27
24.	Declaration of Earl Camden against further concessions,	28
25.	Appointment of Lord Castlereagh as Keeper of the Seal,	29
26.	Origin of the Irish revolutionary troubles, and wretched former government of the country,	30
27.	Armed volunteers of 1782,	31
28.	Organisation of the United Irishmen in 1791,	32
29.	Real objects of this movement,	33

§		Page
30.	Division of Catholics and Protestants, and rise of Orangemen,	34
31.	Great extent and organisation of the conspiracy,	35
32.	Mission of Lord Edward Fitzgerald and Arthur O'Connor to Paris in 1797,	36
33.	Objects of the conspirators,	38
34.	Small regular forces of the Government,	39
35.	Savage conduct of the Irish militia and volunteers,	41
36.	Treaty between the Irish rebels and the French Government,	43
37.	Renewed attempt of the French in 1797, and battle of Camperdown,	44
38.	First rising of the rebels in 1797,	46
39.	Violent designs and proceedings of the rebels,	47
40.	Arrest of the Executive Committee,	48
41.	Lord Edward Fitzgerald's arrest and death,	49
42.	Death of Lord Edward Fitzgerald and Captain Ryan,	50
43.	His character,	51
44.	Breaking out of the rebellion,	52
45.	Reinforcements from England, and successes of the royal forces,	54
46.	Battle of Vinegar Hill,	55
47.	Lord Castlereagh's humane injunctions to General Lake in regard to the rebels,	56
48.	Earl Camden is succeeded by Lord Cornwallis,	58
49-51.	Lord Cornwallis's picture of the state of Ireland at this period,	59-61
52.	Amnesty proposed by Lord Cornwallis and Lord Castlereagh,	62
53.	Violence and passions of the extreme Protestant party in Dublin,	63
54.	Efforts of Lords Cornwallis and Castlereagh on the side of mercy,	64
55.	Landing of the French in Killala Bay,	65
56.	Defeat of the British at Castlebar,	67
57.	Surrender of the invaders to Lord Cornwallis,	68
58.	Good effects of this abortive invasion,	69
59.	Results of the rebellion,	72
60.	Renewed dangers of French invasion,	73
61.	Views of Lord Cornwallis and Lord Castlereagh on the Irish Government,	75
62.	Mr Pitt's projects for pacifying Ireland,	76
63.	Appointment of Lord Castlereagh as Secretary for Ireland, in lieu of Mr Pelham,	78
64.	Great difficulties of the duties with which he was charged,	80
65.	Adaptation of Lord Castlereagh's character for the task,	81
66.	Opposition to it in Dublin,	82
67.	Mr Pitt's views on the Union and Catholic emancipation,	83
68.	Alarming opposition to the Union,	83
69-71.	Articles of the proposed Union, and Lord Castlereagh's views regarding it,	85-87
72.	Importance of this memoir,	88
73.	Trial and death of Wolfe Tone,	88
74.	First movement towards the Union,	90
75.	Rapid progress of the resistance to the Union,	91
76.	Views of the Catholics on the question,	92
77.	General union of the Protestants against the measure,	92
78.	Memoir by Lord Castlereagh on the subject,	93
79.	Views of Government and Lord Castlereagh on Catholic emancipation,	95

§ Page
80. Increased resistance to the measure, ... 96
81. Lord Castlereagh's advice to Government on the language to be assumed in bringing forward the measure, ... 98
82. The Union is passed in the British House, ... 99
83. The Union is rejected by the Irish Parliament, ... 100
84. Effect of this defeat on Mr Pitt, Lord Cornwallis, and Lord Castlereagh, ... 101
85. The English Government resolves to persevere, ... 103
86. The rejection of the Union strengthens Lord Castlereagh's views against immediate emancipation, ... 103
87. He continues to assist the determination of Government on the subject, 105
88. Efforts of the Opposition during the recess, ... 106
89. Renewed preparations of French for invading Ireland, . . 107
90. Disturbed and alarming state of the island, ... 108
91. Military force in Ireland at this time, ... 110
92. Increasing difficulties with the militia and yeomanry, . . 112
93. Lord-Lieutenant's favourable journey in the north, . . . 112
94. Naval preparations of the French for the invasion of Ireland, . 113
95. Changes in the project of Union at the instance of Lord Castlereagh, 115
96. The measure is carried in the Irish House, ... 116
97. Treasonable efforts of the Opposition, and dismissal of Lord Downshire, ... 117
98. Fresh difficulties in the way, ... 118
99. Increasing difficulties attending the measure, which is at length passed, 120
100. Its reception in Parliament and the country, ... 122
101. Difficulties on the part of Government in the creation of peerages, . 123
102. Its settlement by concession of Ministers, ... 126
103. Difficulty in regard to the Catholic claims, ... 127
104. Increased difficulties attending the Catholic question, . . 128
105. Difficulties of the King and Cabinet on the subject, . . 130
106. Mr Pitt's views on the occasion, ... 132
107. Illness of the King, which precludes all further discussion of the Catholic claims at this time, ... 134
108. Lord Hardwicke, the new Lord-Lieutenant, ... 135
109. Patriotic conduct of Lord Cornwallis and Lord Castlereagh, . 135
110. Beneficial effects of the Union, ... 137
111. Lord Hardwicke succeeds Lord Cornwallis in Dublin, and Lord Castlereagh remains in London, ... 138
112. Obloquy to which Lord Castlereagh was exposed from the magnitude of his public services, ... 139

CHAPTER II.

LORD CASTLEREAGH, FROM HIS RESIGNATION OF OFFICE IN IRELAND IN 1801, TO THE ACCESSION OF THE WHIGS TO POWER IN APRIL 1806.

1. Lord Castlereagh's debut in the British Parliament, . . . 141
2-4. His measures in Parliament regarding Ireland, . . 142, 143
5. Woeful picture of Ireland by the Earl of Clare, . . . 145

§		Page
6.	Lord Castlereagh's able memoir on the Catholic claims,	147
7-12.	His memoir on the Catholic claims,	147-151
13.	Which was eminently characteristic of Lord Castlereagh,	152
14.	His views for the adjustment of tithes,	152
15.	Returns relating to the Roman Catholic clergy,	154
16.	His plan for endowing the clergy,	155
17-21.	Lord Castlereagh's memoir on the Defence of Ireland,	155-159
22.	Renewed insurrection,	160
23.	Death of Chief-Justice Kilwarden,	162
24.	Trial and execution of Emmett,	163
25.	Lord Castlereagh's appointment as President of the Board of Control,	164
26.	Critical situation of Great Britain at this time,	165
27.	And of India,	166
28.	His memoir on the relations of France and England in 1802,	167
29.	Negotiations previous to renewal of the war,	169
30.	His memorandum to the Cabinet on the negotiation with France,	170
31.	Grounds stated by Lord Castlereagh for renewing the war,	172
32.	Lord Castlereagh's early intimacy and cordiality with Lord Wellesley,	173
33.	The assistance he rendered him with the Court of Directors,	174
34.	His success with the Directors in regard to Lord Wellesley's measures,	176
35.	Threatened reduction of the army,	177
36.	Lord Wellesley's testimony to his discharge of the duties of President of the Board of Control,	178
37.	His disinterested conduct in public appointments,	180
38.	Lord Castlereagh's opinion of Lord Wellesley,	180
39.	Lord Castlereagh's diplomatic intercourse with Persia,	181
40.	Lord Castlereagh's acknowledgment of Lord Wellesley's conduct and promotions on the Mahratta war,	183
41.	Change of Ministry, and return of Mr Pitt to office,	184
42.	Forces of Great Britain to resist invasion at this time,	186
43.	His plan for the destruction of the Boulogne flotilla,	187
44.	Mr Pitt's foreign policy at this time,	188
45.	Great difficulty in the way of forming a coalition against France,	189
46.	Mr Pitt's treaties with Austria and Russia,	190
47.	Terms of the last treaty of alliance,	191
48.	To which Austria at length accedes,	192
49.	Negotiations of France and England with Prussia,	193
50.	Efforts of Britain to engage Prussia in the alliance by sending an army to Germany,	194
51.	Lord Castlereagh's military measures,	195
52.	The British expedition lands under favourable circumstances,	196
53.	Battle of Austerlitz, and change of Prussia's policy,	197
54.	Return of the British expedition largely reinforced from Hanover,	199
55.	Great views of foreign war now formed by Lord Castlereagh,	199
56.	Magnitude of Lord Castlereagh's propositions already made,	201
57.	Peace of Presburg,	203
58.	Death of Mr Pitt,	204
59.	Change of Ministry, and accession of the Whigs to power,	204
60.	Mr Fox in vain endeavours to make peace,	206
61.	Failure of the warlike expeditions of the Whig Government,	206
62.	Fall of the Whig Cabinet, and return of Lord Castlereagh to power,	209

CHAPTER III.

LORD CASTLEREAGH, FROM HIS RESTORATION TO THE WAR OFFICE IN APRIL, 1807, TO HIS RESIGNATION OF IT IN SEPTEMBER 1809.

§		Page
1.	New Tory Administration, in which Lord Castlereagh is again Secretary for War,	212
2.	Treaties in consequence concluded with the Allied powers,	213
3.	But the succour is promised too late to save from Friedland and Tilsit,	214
4.	The secret articles of Tilsit become known to the British Ministry,	216
5.	Copenhagen expedition, and capture of the Danish fleet,	218
6.	Great impression produced by this stroke in Europe,	219
7.	Arguments of Opposition against the expedition,	220
8-10.	Lord Castlereagh's answer,	221-223
11.	Vindication of the Copenhagen expedition furnished by Napoleon to his historians,	224
12.	Judicious placing of the British army, after Copenhagen, in Sweden,	226
13.	Lord Castlereagh's plan of an attack on South America,	227
14.	His plan for detaching it from the Spanish Crown,	228
15.	His early conferences regarding it with Sir A. Wellesley,	229
16.	Lord Castlereagh's plans in regard to South America,	230
17.	The success of the Copenhagen expedition hastens Junot's march to Lisbon,	232
18.	The Prince Regent of Portugal and fleet sail for Brazil,	233
19.	Great naval force at the disposal of Napoleon,	234
20.	State of the land forces,	236
21.	Lord Castlereagh's system for supplying the army with troops and the defence of the country,	237
22.	Merits of this system,	238
23.	Advantages of the ballot for the local militia,	239
24.	True principles on the subject for Great Britain,	240
25.	Great success of Lord Castlereagh's measures for recruiting the army,	242
26.	Breaking-out of the Spanish war,	243
27.	Lord Castlereagh's disposition of the land force and transports of Great Britain for active operations,	244
28.	His projected operation against Boulogne,	245
29.	Which is abandoned, and an expedition to Portugal is resolved on,	245
30.	Portugal is selected as the battle-field by Lord Castlereagh,	247
31.	Choice of a Commander-in-chief,	249
32.	Landing of the expedition, and battle of Vimeira,	251
33.	Convention of Cintra, which, in the circumstances, was expedient,	253
34.	Advance of Sir John Moore into Spain,	255
35.	Great effects of Sir J. Moore's advance against Soult,	256
36.	Lord Castlereagh disapproves of the abandonment of Spain by the British army,	257
37.	Lord Castlereagh's instructions to Moore and Baird for the disposal of the army, which retreated to Corunna,	259
38.	Lord Castlereagh resolves to persevere in the Peninsular contest,	260

§		Page
39.	Lord Castlereagh's measures for increasing the military force of the country,	262
40.	His plan for increasing the regular army,	263
41.	Which is, with one modification, adopted by Government,	266
42.	Difficulties regarding Sir John Cradock in Portugal,	267
43.	Lord Castlereagh's instructions to Sir A. Wellesley,	269
44.	Force collected in Portugal under Sir A. Wellesley,	270
45.	Lord Castlereagh's and Napoleon's opposite plan of operations,	271
46.	Complete discomfiture of Napoleon's left naval wing by Lord Castlereagh,	272
47.	Extreme difficulty of getting specie in the Peninsula, and Lord Castlereagh's efforts to obtain it,	273
48.	Strange proposition of Marshal Soult, which is declined by Castlereagh and Sir A. Wellesley,	274
49.	Lord Castlereagh on the passage of the Douro,	276
50.	Lord Castlereagh authorises the British advance into Spain,	277
51.	Lord Castlereagh's striking speech in Parliament on the battle of Talavera,	278
52.	Advantages gained by the advance to Talavera and subsequent retreat, which is approved by Castlereagh,	278
53.	Lord Castlereagh's measures for the defence of Portugal,	280
54.	Lord Castlereagh had divined for long the naval projects of France against Great Britain,	281
55.	Lord Castlereagh's plan to defeat Napoleon's naval confederacy,	282
56.	Plan of the Walcheren expedition; vast importance of it,	284
57.	Reasons for preferring the Scheldt to the Peninsula,	285
58.	Lord Castlereagh's early Cabinet Memorandum regarding a Walcheren expedition in 1807 and 1808,	287
59.	The Cabinet hesitates, and requires the opinion of military men on the subject,	289
60.	Great delay of the Cabinet in making up their mind on the subject,	290
61.	Immense force employed at last on the expedition,	291
62.	French forces there, and defenceless state of Antwerp,	292
63.	Lord Castlereagh's instructions to Lord Chatham for the conduct of the expedition,	293
64.	The troops at length embark, and reach the coast of Holland,	295
65.	First successes,	296
66.	Ruinous halt of the British army to besiege Flushing, which is taken,	298
67.	Steps and letters of Napoleon on hearing of the expedition,	299
68.	Napoleon's plan of defence of the Scheldt,	300
69.	Ease with which Antwerp might have been taken at first, and even after the fall of Flushing,	302
70.	Arrival of the British at Batz, and abandonment of the advance,	303
71.	Rejoicings at Antwerp, and vainglorious boasting of Bernadotte,	304
72.	Rapid and fatal progress of the Walcheren fever, which compels the evacuation of the island,	305
73.	Cause of the failure of the expedition,	306
74.	Great dissatisfaction in England at the failure of the expedition,	308
75.	Intrigue in the Cabinet to overturn Lord Castlereagh,	309
76.	Lord Castlereagh challenges Mr Canning, who is wounded, and they both resign,	311
77.	Mr Canning's conduct was unjustifiable, though the duel was equally so,	312

§ Page
78. Resumé of Lord Castlereagh's achievements at the War Office, . 313
79. Real causes of this decision of the Cabinet; Lord Castlereagh was in advance of the age, ... 315
80. Causes of the general distrust of Lord Castlereagh at this time, . 316

CHAPTER IV.

SIR CHARLES STEWART FROM HIS SERVICE WITH THE EXPEDITION TO THE HELDER IN 1799, TO HIS RECEIVING THE THANKS OF PARLIAMENT IN 1809.

1. Resumé of Sir Charles Stewart's life from 1798, . . . 318
2. His services in 1799 in Holland, ... 318
3. He is appointed Aide-de-Camp to the King, and Under-Secretary of State for Ireland, ... 319
4. First operations in Portugal, ... 320
5. His advance into Spain with Sir John Moore, ... 321
6. Gallant actions near Sahagun, and retreat of the army towards Galicia, ... 322
7. Gallant action near Benavente, ... 323
8. Disastrous march to Corunna, ... 324
9. Horrors of the retreat, ... 325
10. Battle offered at Lugo, and march to Corunna, . . . 326
11. Arrival of the army at Corunna, ... 327
12. Preparation for the battle of Corunna, ... 328
13. Battle of Corunna, ... 329
14. General Stewart sails to Lisbon as Adjutant-General of Sir A. Wellesley's army, ... 330
15. State of affairs when he landed in Portugal, ... 331
16. Universal joy in Lisbon on their arrival, ... 331
17. Advance to the Douro, ... 332
18. Soult's incipient revolt against Napoleon, ... 333
19. Its reception by Napoleon and Sir A. Wellesley, . . . 333
20. Advance of Sir A. Wellesley to the Douro, ... 334
21. Passage of the Douro, ... 335
22. Pursuit of the French out of Portugal, ... 336
23. Operations in Spain are determined on with Cuesta, . . . 337
24. Plan of operations, ... 338
25. Interview with Cuesta, and appearance of the Spanish army, . . 339
26. Advance to Talavera, and preparations for a battle there, . . 340
27. The French forces unite, and again approach Talavera, . . 341
28. Position of the troops at Talavera, ... 342
29. Bloody combat on the evening of the 27th July, . . . 343
30. Battle of Talavera, ... 344
31. Desperate attack of the French on the centre and right, . . 345
32. Victory of the British, ... 346
33. Results of the battle, ... 346
34. Picturesque anecdotes during the battle, ... 347
35. Position of the British army after the battle, ... 348

§ Page
36. Cuesta abandons the British wounded, ... 349
37. Sir Arthur retreats by the bridge of Arzobispo to the south of the Tagus, ... 350
38. Noble conduct of Si A. Wellesley, ... 351
39. Continued disasters of the Spaniards, and retreat of the British into the valley of the Guadiana, ... 352
40. Return of General Stewart on leave to England, . . . 353
41. General Stewart's exposition of Sir A. Wellesley's plans, . . 354
42. Thanks of the House of Commons to General Stewart, . . 356
43. General Stewart's answer, ... 357
44. He is made a Knight of the Bath, ... 358
45. Rapid rise of General Stewart, owing mainly to his ability and good conduct, ... 358

CHAPTER V.

FROM THE RETURN OF GENERAL STEWART TO THE PENINSULAR ARMY IN MARCH 1810, TO THE EXPULSION OF THE FRENCH FROM PORTUGAL.

1. State of the Peninsula when General Stewart returned to it in March 1810, 359
2. Disasters in Spain which had led to the new position taken by Wellington, 360
3. Improved condition of the British army, ... 361
4. Lord Wellington's position and prospects at this time, . . 362
5. Position and strength of the French forces, ... 362
6. Desponding feelings in the army, ... 363
7. Siege and capture of Ciudad Rodrigo by the French, . . . 364
8. Unsuccessful skirmish of advanced posts, ... 366
9. Severe fight with Craufurd's division, ... 367
10. Results of the combat, and siege of Almeida, ... 368
11. Siege and fall of Almeida, ... 369
12. Gloomy aspect of affairs in the British army, ... 371
13. Political difficulties of Wellington's situation, ... 372
14. Massena, by Napoleon's positive orders, invades Portugal . . 373
15. Approach of both armies to Busaco, ... 374
16. Description of the position of Busaco, ... 374
17. Massena is goaded on to attack, ... 376
18. Battle of Busaco, ... 376
19. Defeat of the attack on the British left, ... 377
20. Results of the battle on both sides, ... 378
21. Great service of Sir Charles Stewart in this battle, . . . 379
22. Massena turns the British position, ... 380
23. Wellington retires to Torres Vedras, ... 381
24. Horrors of the retreat, ... 382
25. Sir Charles Stewart's description of the lines of Torres Vedras, . 383
26. Description of the first line, ... 383
27. Weak points of the line, ... 385
28. Massena resolves to blockade the lines only, ... 386
29. Improved situation of Wellington, ... 387

§		Page
30.	Depressed condition of the French army,	388
31.	Wellington's foresight of Massena's designs,	389
32.	Movements of Wellington on the retreat of the French,	391
33.	Wellington declines to attack Massena at Santarem,	391
34.	Improved health and spirits of the troops,	392
35.	Wretched condition of the French army,	393
36.	Wellington's difficulties,	394
37.	Firmness of Wellington at this juncture,	395
38.	Napoleon's plan for a fresh invasion of Portugal,	396
39.	Massena's difficulties as to crossing the Tagus,	397
40.	Soult's operations in Andalusia,	397
41.	Great successes of Soult in Estremadura,	398
42.	Napoleon's order to Massena at this period,	399
43.	Operations of the French and English for crossing the Tagus,	400
44.	Massena's retreat,	401
45.	Gloomy state of the British army at this period,	401
46.	First operations of Wellington in pursuit,	403
47.	Action at Redinha,	403
48.	Which is carried by the Allies,	404
49.	Continuance of the retreat,	405
50.	Combat at the bridge of the Ceira,	405
51.	Continuance of the retreat across the Ceira,	406
52.	Difficulties of the pursuit,	407
53.	Concluding combat at Sabugal,	407
54.	State of the French army when it re-entered Spain,	409
55.	Material losses of the French army during the campaign,	410
56.	Wellington's views of the campaign, and share Sir Charles Stewart had in it,	410

CHAPTER VI.

SIR CHARLES STEWART, FROM THE RENEWAL OF THE CAMPAIGN IN PORTUGAL IN MAY 1811, TO THE FALL OF CIUDAD RODRIGO AND HIS RETURN TO ENGLAND IN JANUARY 1812.

1.	Renewed plan for the invasion of Portugal,	412
2.	Wellington's movements to regain Badajos,	413
3.	Wellington undertakes the siege of Badajos,	414
4.	Position of the troops covering the blockade of Almeida,	415
5.	Description of Fuentes d'Onore,	416
6.	Massena's reasons for resuming the offensive,	417
7.	Necessity of relieving Almeida and Badajos,	418
8.	Forces on both sides,	418
9.	Attack of Massena on Fuentes d'Onore,	419
10.	Arrival of the Imperial Guard, and renewal of the battle,	421
11.	Preparations for battle on the 5th by Wellington,	422
12.	Battle of Fuentes d'Onore,	422
13.	Desperate conflict in Fuentes d'Onore,	424

§		Page
14.	Massena retreats without a further attack,	425
15.	Lord Londonderry's reflections on this battle,	426
16.	This was a turning-point in Sir Charles Stewart's fortunes,	427
17.	Massena's orders to Brennier to evacuate Almeida,	428
18.	Blowing up of Almeida, and escape of Brennier,	429
19.	Wellington despatches troops and stores for Estremadura,	431
20.	Operations for the first siege of Badajos,	432
21.	Progress of the siege, which is suspended,	433
22.	Forces on both sides,	434
23.	Description of the field of battle,	435
24.	Battle of Albuera,	436
25.	Gallant attack of Stewart's division,	437
26.	Gallant advance of Houghton's brigade,	438
27.	Glorious charge of the Fusilier brigade under Cole, which regains the day,	439
28.	Victory of the British,	440
29.	Results of the battle on both sides,	441
30.	Soult retires to Llerena, and Beresford resumes the siege of Badajos,	442
31.	Siege-train of Wellington, and stores,	443
32.	Description of Badajos,	444
33.	Fort St Christoval,	444
34.	Commencement of the siege,	445
35.	Repulse of the storm of Fort St Christoval,	446
36.	A second assault on Fort Christoval is resolved on,	447
37.	Second assault of St Christoval, which is repulsed,	447
38.	Raising of the siege, and forces on both sides,	448
39.	Wellington offers battle to Soult and Marmont, which is declined,	449
40.	The French generals decline the conflict,	450
41.	Both armies are put into cantonments,	450
42.	Habits of the army when in these cantonments,	451
43.	Movement of the army to new cantonments on the Tagus, its reinforcement, and plan of operations,	452
44.	Ciudad Rodrigo is revictualled, and Wellington establishes a distant blockade,	453
45.	Marmont resolves to revictual Ciudad Rodrigo,	453
46.	Wellington's preparations, and advance of the enemy, who relieve Ciudad Rodrigo,	455
47.	Approach to El Bodon,	456
48.	Sir Charles Stewart's account of the action,	456
49.	Glorious cavalry action under Alten and Sir Charles Stewart,	457
50.	Retreat of the British to Guinaldo, and their dangerous position,	458
51.	Splendid appearance of the French army here collected,	459
52.	Marmont declines battle,	460
53.	Retreat of the British, and its reasons,	461
54.	Retreat of the British, and assembling of their whole army,	461
55.	The French decline the conflict,	462
56.	The French go into winter-quarters,	463
57.	Wellington's projects at this time,	464
58.	Brilliant success of General Hill at Aroyo de los Molinos,	464
59.	Wellington approaches Ciudad Rodrigo,	466
60.	Dislocation of the French armies in Spain,	466
61.	Investment of Ciudad Rodrigo and its difficulties,	467

§		Page
62.	Description of the fortress,	468
63.	Wellington resolves on an attack on the place,	469
64.	Storm of the greater Teson,	470
65.	Rapid progress of the siege,	470
66.	The rampart is breached from a distance,	472
67.	Splendid appearance of the bombardment,	472
68.	A practicable breach is made,	473
69.	Plan of the assault,	474
70.	Aspect of the trenches before the assault,	476
71.	The assault of the place,	477
72.	Fearful disorders after the place was taken,	478
73.	Great results of this conquest,	479
74.	Both armies are placed in cantonments,	479
75.	Return to Britain of Sir Charles Stewart, and death of Lady Stewart,	480

CHAPTER VII.

LORD CASTLEREAGH, FROM HIS RESIGNATION OF OFFICE IN SEPTEMBER 1809, TO THE OPENING OF THE GERMAN WAR IN MARCH 1813.

1.	Important career of Lord Castlereagh when out of office in Parliament,	482
2.	Regency question,	483
3-5.	Lord Castlereagh's speech in support of the restrictions,	484, 486
6.	Ferment in the country against the Peninsular war,	487
7-11.	Lord Castlereagh's speech on the Spanish war of 1809,	488-493
12.	Growing despondence on the Peninsular war in the country,	494
13.	Grounds of Lord Castlereagh and Wellington's confidence in the war in the Peninsula,	495
14.	Immense difficulty of getting specie for the British army,	497
15.	Appointment of the Bullion Committee,	498
16.	Bullion Report,	499
17.	Mr Vansittart's counter-resolutions,	500
18-29.	Lord Castlereagh's argument against the Bullion Report,	501-512
30.	Result of the debate,	512
31.	Reflections on this speech,	513
32.	What if the report of the committee had been adopted,	514
33, 34.	Lord Castlereagh's speech on the battle of Albuera,	515, 516
35.	Great distress in Great Britain at this time,	517
36.	The Orders in Council issued by the British Government,	518
37.	Their disastrous effects in Great Britain,	519
38.	Effect of the American Non-intercourse Act,	520
39.	Events which led to Lord Castlereagh being appointed Foreign Secretary,	521
40.	Assassination of Mr Perceval,	521
41.	Debate on the Orders in Council,	523
42-44.	Lord Castlereagh's reply,	524-526
45.	Repeal of the Orders in Council,	527
46.	Situation of Europe when Lord Castlereagh returned to power,	528
47.	Great change produced by Lord Castlereagh's accession to office,	529
48.	Forces of Great Britain at this time, and their distribution,	530

§ Page
49. Military forces at Wellington's disposal, and Lord Castlereagh's great efforts to increase it, ... 531
50. Napoleon's proposals of peace to Britain, and Lord Castlereagh's answer, 531
51. Lord Castlereagh's cautious policy as to Italy, ... 533
52. Diplomatic relations with Russia, ... 534
53. Treaty between Russia and Turkey, ... 535
54. Lord Castlereagh's efforts to effect a treaty between Sweden and Russia, 537
55. Peace with Sweden on condition of her getting Norway, . . . 538
56. Chances of the approaching Russian campaign, ... 539
57. Alexander's half promise of the throne of France to Bernadotte, . 541

CHAPTER VIII.

FROM THE APPOINTMENT OF SIR CHARLES STEWART AS MINISTER AT THE COURT OF PRUSSIA IN MARCH 1813, TO THE ARMISTICE OF PLESWITZ IN JUNE FOLLOWING.

1. Opening of the year 1813, and aspect of Germany, ... 542
2. Situation of Germany, and treaties with Prussia at this period by Great Britain, ... 543
3. Sir Charles Stewart's important services with the Government, . 544
4. Requirements of a diplomatic envoy to the Court of Prussia, . . 545
5. Sir Charles Stewart combined all the requisites, ... 545
6. Situation of the French and Allied armies at this period, . . . 546
7. Lord Walpole's secret mission to Vienna, and views of Austria at this period, ... 548
8. Sir Charles Stewart lands in Prussia; feelings of the people, . . 548
9. Schwartzenberg's mission to Paris, ... 549
10. Conference of Maret and Schwartzenberg, ... 550
11. Aspect of affairs at Vienna, ... 551
12. Secret negotiation between Austria and the King of Saxony, . . 552
13. Secret negotiation with Bavaria, ... 553
14. Napoleon's proposals to Austria, ... 554
15, 16. Secret conferences of M. de Narbonne with Metternich, . 554, 555
17. Conclusion of this conference, ... 556
18. Answer of Metternich to Napoleon's proposals to Austria, . . 557
19. Positions of the French and Allied armies at this period, when Sir Charles Stewart joined the Allied headquarters, ... 558
20. Forces of Napoleon, ... 559
21. Forces and positions of the Allies, ... 561
22. Accession of Bernadotte to the Confederacy, ... 561
23. Sir Charles Stewart's first steps in Germany, ... 563
24. Offers to surrender Spandau for bribes, ... 563
25. State of affairs at Dresden on Sir Charles's arrival, ... 564
26. Interview of Sir Charles Stewart with the King of Prussia, . . 566
27. Death of Kutusoff, and forward movement of the Allies towards Leipsic, 567
28. New commercial tariff, and conclusion of a treaty of alliance with Russia and Prussia, ... 568

§		Page
29.	Mutual advance of the opposite armies,	569
30.	Combat of Weissenfels, and death of Bessières,	570
31.	Movements before battle of Lützen,	571
32.	Battle of Lützen,	573
33.	Leipsic is carried by the French,	574
34.	Success of the Allies on the French right, and desperate conflicts there,	575
35.	Great successes of the Allies in the five villages,	577
36.	Crisis of the battle, which turns to the advantage of the French,	578
37.	Last effort of Napoleon, which arrested the Allies,	578
38.	The Allies resolve to retreat, and Blucher's nocturnal irruptions into Marmont's lines,	580
39.	Results of the battle, and forces on both sides,	581
40.	Retreat of the Allies to Dresden,	583
41.	The Allies resolve to retire to Bautzen : its strategic advantages,	584
42.	Evacuation of Dresden by the Allies, and its entry by the French,	585
43.	Stern reception of the magistrates by Napoleon,	585
44.	Passage of the Elbe by the French,	586
45.	The King of Saxony is reconciled to Napoleon,	587
46.	Bolder tone assumed with the Cabinet of Vienna,	588
47.	Metternich's proposals on hearing of the battle of Lützen,	589
48.	Metternich's proposals for a general peace,	590
49.	Which are repudiated with scorn by Napoleon,	591
50.	Secret despatch of Stackelberg to Nesselrode intercepted,	591
51.	Napoleon's change of plan in consequence of this discovery,	592
52.	Napoleon's immense preparations for the prosecution of the war,	593
53.	His measures to augment the reserve on the Rhine,	594
54.	His vast measures for fortifying and strengthening the Elbe,	595
55.	Forces of the Allies,	595
56.	Force and position of the Allies at Bautzen,	596
57.	Advance and composition of the French army,	597
58.	Napoleon's reception of the Austrian proposals,	597
59.	Opening of a direct negotiation between France and Russia,	598
60.	Combat of Königswartha, and defeat of the French,	599
61.	Description of the field of battle by Sir Charles Stewart,	600
62.	French force, and plan of attack,	601
63.	Commencement of the battle and progress of the French on the Allied left,	602
64.	Progress of the action on the Allied right and centre,	603
65.	Renewal of the battle on the day following,	604
66.	Decisive attack of Ney with the French left wing on the Allied right,	605
67.	Final and decisive attack of Ney and Marmont upon Blucher,	606
68.	Napoleon's movements in pursuit of the Allies,	607
69.	Sir Charles Stewart's description of the retreat,	607
70.	Combats during the retreat,	608
71.	Death of Duroc,	609
72.	Napoleon's last conversation with him,	610
73.	Continuation of the retreat, and combat at Haynau,	611
74.	The Allies move towards Bohemia,	612
75.	Reasons which led both parties at this period to desire an armistice,	613
76.	Reasons against it; but it is at length concluded,	614
77.	An armistice is agreed to by both parties,	615

§		Page
78.	Conclusion of an armistice,	616
79.	Further discussions of Napoleon direct with Austria,	617
80.	Conclusion of the armistice of Pleswitz,	618
81.	Thiers's reflections on this armistice,	619
82.	Review of the Allied army,	620
83.	Honour conferred on Sir R. Wilson,	620

CHAPTER IX.

ARMISTICE OF PLESWITZ. JUNE 4—AUGUST 18, 1813.

1.	Vast importance of the matters treated at the Congress of Prague,	622
2.	Sincerity of Austria and her views,	623
3.	Forces of Russia and Prussia,	623
4.	Great advantages which this state of affairs gave to Napoleon,	624
5.	Lord Castlereagh's view of the alliance,	625
6.	Importance of Bernadotte to the alliance,	626
7.	His equivocal attitude towards the Allies,	627
8.	Sir Charles Stewart's account of him in his published work,	629
9.	His private correspondence on the subject,	630
10.	His real views and designs,	632
11.	His real and secret views at this period,	635
12.	State of negotiations at Prague,	636
13.	Napoleon's line of policy in consequence,	637
14.	Preliminary difficulties in point of form stated by France,	638
15.	The Emperor Francis comes to Gitschin in Bohemia, and Metternich to Dresden,	639
16.	Explicit explanation between Metternich and Nesselrode,	640
17.	Napoleon's fresh delays,	640
18.	Signature of the Treaty of June 15, by England, Russia, and Prussia,	641
19.	Sir Charles Stewart's efforts with Bernadotte renewed,	643
20.	Interview of Metternich with the Allied sovereigns,	644
21.	Napoleon invites M. de Metternich to Dresden,	645
22.	Interview of Metternich with Maret,	646
23.	Interview of Metternich with Napoleon,	647
24, 25.	Metternich's answer,	648, 649
26, 27.	Conferences continued,	651, 652
28.	Great sensation produced by this interview,	653
29.	Renewal of the conference between Metternich and Maret,	654
30.	News of the battle of Vitoria, and its great effect,	656
31.	Napoleon's reasons for fixing on the Elbe as his line of defence,	657
32.	Napoleon's measure for fortifying the Elbe at Koenigstein and Dresden,	658
33.	His works at Torgau, Wittenberg, and Magdeburg,	659
34.	His measures regarding Hamburg and Werben,	660
35.	Immense exactions of Davoust at Hamburg,	661
36.	Forces which Napoleon had collected by the middle of August,	662
37.	Plan of operations agreed on by the Allies at Trachenberg,	663
38.	Forces of the Allies at the resumption of hostilities,	664

§		Page
39.	Napoleon's plan of operations for the campaign,	665
40.	Plan of the campaign of the Allies,	665
41.	State of the negotiations with Austria,	666
42.	Intrepid conduct of Lord Cathcart and Sir Charles Stewart in regard to an Austrian subsidy,	668
43.	Change of policy on the part of Bernadotte,	670
44.	Treacherous attack on the free corps of Lutzow and the poet Körner,	672
45.	Sir Charles Stewart's gloomy views of the negotiations,	673
46.	Napoleon's delay in sending plenipotentiaries to Prague,	674
47.	Fresh difficulty raised by Napoleon as to the form of the conferences,	676
48.	Secret conference of Metternich and Narbonne,	677
49.	M. de Narbonne in vain tries to persuade Napoleon of his danger,	678
50.	Napoleon goes to Mayence to meet the Empress,	680
51.	Final proposals of Austria,	681
52.	Noble conduct of M. de Caulaincourt,	682
53.	Termination of the congress, and declaration of war by Austria against France,	683
54.	Napoleon tries in vain to engage Austria in a further secret negotiation,	684
55.	Fresh effort of M. de Caulaincourt to bring about a peace,	685
56.	Last proposals of Napoleon, which are rejected by the Allies,	685
57.	Last effort of Caulaincourt to induce Napoleon to make peace,	686
58.	Enthusiasm of the Allies at the Austrian declaration of war,	686
59.	Sir Charles Stewart's confidential conversation with Metternich,	687
60.	Grand review of the Austrian army,	688
61.	Advance of money to the Austrians by Lord Cathcart and Sir Charles Stewart,	689
62.	Difficulties about a commander-in-chief,	690
63.	French review,	691
64.	Reflections on these conferences,	692

LIVES OF LORD CASTLEREAGH

AND

SIR CHARLES STEWART.

CHAPTER I.

LINEAGE AND EARLY LIFE OF LORD CASTLEREAGH AND SIR CHARLES STEWART—IRISH REBELLION AND UNION.

1. Lineage of the Londonderry family.

THE family of Londonderry is a branch of the ancient one of Sir William Stewart of Garlies in Scotland, from whom the Earls of Galloway in that country are also descended. A younger son of that family, in the time of James I. of England, received a grant of land from that monarch in the county of Donegal, and, in consequence, settled on his estate of Balylawn Castle in Ireland. The family during several generations became gradually enriched—partly by ability and prudence, partly by fortunate marriages—insomuch that the representative of it, Alexander Stewart of Mount Stewart, in the county of Down, was elected member of Parliament for the city of Londonderry in 1730. Robert Stewart of Balylawn Castle was elevated to the peerage, on 18th November 1789, by the title of Baron Stewart; and was soon after created Viscount Castlereagh on 6th October 1795, and Earl of Londonderry on 9th August 1796. The family was

CHAP. I.

advanced a step farther in the peerage by the elevation of its head Robert, the father of the subject of this memoir, to the dignity of a marquess on 22d January 1816. All these successive steps had been conferred by Tory administrations; so that, from political connections not less than personal and traditional principle, they belonged to the Conservative party in the State.[1]

[1] Burke's Peerage, *voce* Londonderry; Castlereagh Corresp. i. 1-3.

2. Family of the first Marquess.

Robert, the elder brother, who first succeeded to these dignities on the decease of his father, was born on 18th June 1769, the same year with the Duke of Wellington, and on a day of the year destined to be rendered memorable by the battle of Waterloo. Charles William Vane, the second son, came into the world on 18th May 1778. The mother of the eldest was Sarah Frances, daughter of Francis, Marquess of Hertford; and of the second, Frances, eldest daughter of Charles, first Earl Camden. By his second marriage Lord Londonderry had no less than eight children, of whom seven were daughters, many of whom married into families of high rank. In particular, the eldest daughter, Frances Anne, married Lord Charles Fitzroy; Caroline, the second, married Thomas Wood, Esq. of Garmost, M.P. for the county of Brecon; Georgiana, the third, married George Canning, Esq., afterwards Lord Garvagh; Emily Jane, the fifth, married Viscount Hardinge, the celebrated Commander-in-chief in India and in Great Britain; and the sixth, Octavia, married Edward, second Lord Ellenborough. Thus, both by their paternal and maternal descent, as well as by the connections formed by their sisters, both brothers were allied to families of high rank, many of them distinguished by great public services. But it may with truth be said, that they conferred more distinction by these alliances than they received; and that the proudest of their relations, ere long, were glad to refer to their connection with the Stewart family as the brightest jewel in their coronets.[2]

[2] Burke's Peerage, *voce* Londonderry.

Robert the father, the first marquess, was a man of

CHAP. I.

a remarkably strong mind—sound, practical, and sagacious. In addition to the honours bestowed on him by the Crown, which were mainly on account of the eminent services of his son, he added largely to the family fortune by his prudent and yet spirited management. The mothers of both sons were women of ability—a peculiarity almost always observable in those who have given birth to men of distinction. From a very early period the character of the two brothers exhibited a marked difference—a circumstance which might be ascribed to their different mothers, were it not that the same is often observed in families where there has been only one father and mother, and education and early circumstances have been exactly the same. Young Lord Castlereagh was, from the first, patient and persevering, firm in resolution, and unwavering in conduct, but with abilities which marked him out for the highest destinies. Charles Vane, from his earliest years, was bold, ardent, and impetuous; high-spirited, but generous; quick in taking offence, but ready to forgive. The future hero shone forth from the very first even in his boyish actions. Yet though their characters were thus different, the tenderest friendship existed between them, which continued with the most eminent advantage to both through the whole of life.

3. Character of the two brothers in childhood.

Charles Vane was sent at six years of age, by his grandfather, Lord Camden, to Eton, where he remained eight years. A striking incident early in life evinced the peculiar character of the young man. In the month of June 1791, George, first Earl of Waldegrave, one of the scholars at Eton, was drowned in the Thames. He had not completed his tenth year. He was an intimate friend and companion of Stewart's; and the following affecting account of the melancholy incident, and Stewart's conduct on the occasion, was given in a letter to his father by his tutor and intimate friend:—"Poor little Waldegrave was buried yesterday. My dear friend Stewart had nearly been drowned in attempting to save him. He

4. Striking anecdote of Charles Stewart.

CHAP. I. 1791.

dived after him till he was very much exhausted, and obliged to come to the bank to take breath. After a little time he dived again, when he saw the body lying at the bottom. The sight was nearly fatal to him; for such was his grief that he was deprived of his senses and rose to the surface insensible, when he floated apparently dead. He sank twice, and would inevitably have perished also, had not Mr Charles Carter [who afterwards kept boats at Eton], on the third occasion, by a great effort, caught him by the hair, and dragged him into a punt." In this courageous act and generous disregard of self is to be recognised the same chivalrous spirit which, in after days, headed the charge against the Imperial Guard on the Esla, and strove to save the honour of Christendom by effecting the liberation of Abd-el-Kader, detained a prisoner in violation of his capitulation by Louis Philippe.

5. He enters the army in 1791.

His preference for the profession of arms, having, before the expiration of this period, become decided, he entered the army on 3d April 1791 as ensign in the 108th Regiment. He was promoted to the rank of lieutenant in the same regiment on 8th January 1793, and received a company in it on 7th August 1794. His quickness and intelligence in military matters having by this time become known, he was in the same year appointed Deputy-Assistant Quartermaster-General to the force under General Doyle, which landed on the Isle Dieu in France, and subsequently joined the corps under Lord Moira, which crossed from Ostend to the army under the Duke of York, then actively engaged with the French in Flanders. When this force was driven out of the Low Countries, he was attached to General Crawford's mission to the headquarters of the Austrian army, which still kept the field on the left bank of the Rhine, and was actively engaged in the early part of 1795. He then received his first wound, having been struck by a musket-ball under the left eye, when bravely

charging, at the head of some heavy Austrian cavalry, a detachment of French hussars by whom they were hard pressed. After the retreat of the Austrian army from the Low Countries he returned to England, and was appointed aide-de-camp to his grandfather Lord Camden, then Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. On the 31st of July 1795 he succeeded to the majority of his regiment, then numbered the 106th. After this his promotion was very rapid. On 4th August 1796 he was appointed major of the 5th Dragoons; and on 1st January 1797 he became lieutenant-colonel of the same regiment. He was on duty as aide-de-camp to Lord Camden in Dublin when the insubordination broke out in that corps which led to its being disbanded. But he immediately repaired to his post, and his conduct in striving to check that disgraceful mutiny was so meritorious, that it not only effaced, so far as he was concerned, this calamitous event, but drew forth the highest commendation from the Government and the Commander-in-chief.* When the regiment was disbanded, he was attached to the 18th Light Dragoons, at that time a skeleton, but which afterwards, under his able direction, became one of the most distinguished cavalry regiments in the service.

As long as mankind shall esteem the destroyers of their species more than their preservers, which will probably be to the end of the world, no human ability will

* "DEAR CHARLES,—I am surprised I should not have heard from you in consequence of the strong measures which are about to take place in the 5th Dragoons. In Lord Cornwallis's representation of their state of insubordination and indiscipline he does you great justice, and says that, meritorious as your conduct is, it is impossible that you, with all the rest of the officers in combination against you, can restore the regiment to discipline. I find it is likely the regiment is to be broke, and I could not satisfy myself without inquiring from the Duke of York how the regiment was to stand. He means to advise the King that it shall be broke, but that you shall remain on pay till you are appointed to a lieutenant-colonelcy in another regiment of dragoons, which will take place very soon. The Duke said that, so far from this event being of any detriment to your military objects, your exertions have been very great, and do you great credit. I thought it would be satisfactory to you to hear *this*."—EARL CAMDEN *to the* HON. LIEUT.-COL. CHARLES STEWART, *January* 11, 1799; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, ii. 89.

CHAP. I. 1799.

be able to make the biography of statesmen and philosophers so interesting to the majority of readers as that of warriors. The reason is not so much that the human mind in general is naturally inclined to cruelty, or takes delight in tales of horror or suffering, as that those who are engaged in spreading such calamities among mankind are necessarily exposed to greater vicissitudes of fortune, and undergo more thrilling and heart-stirring adventures, than those who, in the cool shade of peace and retirement, cultivate the arts, or reflect on the truths which are finally to bless or improve mankind. Plutarch's *Lives* are almost entirely taken up with the warriors or conquerors of antiquity; and in modern times no biographies are so popular, or produce so widespread and lasting an impression, as those which, like Southey's *Life of Nelson*, or Macaulay's sketch of Clive, portray the career of the most successful warriors by sea or land. On this account it is not to be expected that the life of Lord Castlereagh can present so many heart-stirring incidents as that of his brother, the fellow-soldier of Wellington and Blucher. Yet there is an interest of no ordinary kind in tracing the early development of a mind for whom great things were destined, and seeing how the character was formed which bridled Napoleon in the plenitude of his power, and rescued from slavery a suffering world.

6. Superior interest of military to civil biography.

If it be true, as has been often said, that the boy is the father of the man, it is of the highest importance to trace out the records of early life which evince the first disposition of men who have played an important part on the great theatre of the world. Owing to the unfortunate loss by shipwreck of a great part of the Castlereagh papers, and nearly all of those which relate to his early life, the materials for such a picture in the case of the elder brother are by no means abundant. Yet there is enough to show that in his case the aphorism holds good, and that the peculiar type of Lord Castlereagh's mind

7. Character of the first Lord Londonderry.

had become apparent at a very early period of life. His father was a bright example of every manly and Christian virtue. In domestic life he exhibited an integrity of character and sweetness of disposition which early communicated itself to his offspring. Never was a family more united, happier in themselves, or that retained those feelings more completely through life, than that of the first Lord Londonderry. Tenderly attached to all his children, he was especially so to his eldest son Robert, who, on himself being advanced to the rank of an earl in 1797, became Viscount Castlereagh. He was, literally speaking, the delight and pride of his later days. For his conduct, both in public and private, Lord Castlereagh had in his father the best model of a true patriot. His kindness and benevolence to the poor of all descriptions around his residence, and especially on his own estate, was unbounded, and shone forth with peculiar lustre during the severe scarcity of 1799 and 1800. Large quantities of provisions were then imported by him from distant places, and retailed at a nominal price at his own town of Newton-Ards. It was thus alone that great numbers were preserved from perishing of famine. His public charities were on the largest scale, and much beyond what is usual with persons of his fortune. In gifts to the Presbyterian meeting-house in his neighbourhood he expended £250 a-year. To give work to the labouring poor, he always employed an extra and unnecessary number of hands in his grounds both summer and winter. With his tenantry he established relations so kindly that they almost amounted to the concession of the *tenant right*, so much the object of contention in subsequent times. On one occasion he voluntarily reduced the rental of a small part only of his estate in the Ards, on a representation that they were too high, £900 a-year. It may easily be believed that with these dispositions he was adored by his tenantry and all the poor, of whatever persuasion and creed, in his neighbourhood.[1] As a senator,

[1] Castlereagh Corresp. i. 70-72.

CHAP. I. 1786.

his conduct was equally honourable and patriotic. In the several parliaments in which he sat as a representative, his conduct was regulated on every occasion by the purest motives and the most scrupulous regard to integrity.

8. Noble anecdote of Lord Castlereagh on Strangford Lough. Aug. 5, 1786.

Young Robert Stewart, who will be called by his historical name of LORD CASTLEREAGH, inherited all his father's benevolence of heart and sweetness of disposition, but with that, as in his brother Charles, was united a firmness and resolution of character which nothing could either ruffle or intimidate. Of the latter feature in his character, a memorable instance occurred in early youth. He received the rudiments of his education at a public school in Armagh. While there, on the 5th August 1786, he went out alone in a boat, with a schoolfellow, Henry Sturrock, a boy of twelve years of age—Castlereagh being just turned of seventeen—to sail on Strangford Lough. When at the distance of three miles from the shore, the boat was upset by a sudden squall of wind. Lord Castlereagh was a very indifferent swimmer; little Sturrock was utterly ignorant of that art, and incapable of supporting himself a moment on the surface. When they were thrown into the water, Castlereagh got hold of his young friend; and such was his fortitude and presence of mind, that he contrived to keep both himself and the boy above water for *more than an hour*, at the end of which time they were picked up by the Rev. Mr Cleland and Mr Sturrock, the young boy's father, who, missing the boat on the beach, put off to their assistance. When taken up, Castlereagh had lost the use of his limbs from the cold of the water, and was nearly blind; but his right hand still firmly grasped little Sturrock, who was totally senseless. This interesting and characteristic anecdote is commemorated in an inscription upon a picture of the Lough of Strangford in the "Temple of the Winds," at the family-seat.[1]*

[1] Conte, ch. i. Castlereagh Corresp. i. 4, 5.

* This inscription, placed by the first Lord Londonderry, is in these terms: "This view of Strangford Lough is for ever memorable for the providential

It is very remarkable that an incident of precisely the same character, as already mentioned, marked the opening of life in young Charles Stewart at a still earlier period.

In the autumn of 1786 Lord Castlereagh was sent to St John's College, Cambridge, under the tuition of the Rev. Mr Pearce, afterwards Dean of Ely. When there, says Dr Bushby, "That he applied himself with great diligence and success to the appointed studies of that place, appears from his recorded positions in the classes after every examination. In that college, an examination of the students took place every half-year, in the elements of mathematics, in certain portions of classical authors, and in logic and moral philosophy. Mr Stewart's name was among the first on every occasion; and, at the third examination, in December 1787, being the last which he passed, he was the first in the first class. . . . I have not been able to ascertain the cause why he left college so soon—whether it was to travel abroad, or that some opportunity was offered in Ireland for his entering Parliament. I have inquired of a good many persons who remember him here, and they all agree in the same account of him, testifying as to his gentlemanly appearance and manners, his diligence in study, and the propriety of his conduct in all respects. . . . His most intimate and almost inseparable companion was the present Marquess of Bristol, who was also greatly distinguished as a

9. His early life at Cambridge.

escape, on August 5, 1786, of Robert Stewart, aged seventeen years, and of Henry Sturrock, a boy of twelve, who, sailing on the lake, and being overset in a thunderstorm nearly three miles from the shore, floated on the water more than an hour, till they were taken up in a boat by the activity and collected conduct of the Rev. Mr Cleland, who happened to accompany the Rev. Mr Sturrock to the Temple, and missing their vessel, fled to the beach, put off to their assistance, and saved them as they were in the instant of perishing. Robert Stewart had lost the power of his limbs, from the coldness of the water, and almost his sight. Henry Sturrock was totally senseless: the former an indifferent swimmer—the latter never swam before in his life, and, when he attempted it after his recovery, was found incapable of supporting himself a moment on the surface. Let not these particulars of a deliverance almost miraculous pass without just emotions of gratitude to the Almighty Preserver, and let it teach a due reliance on His Providence in the greatest of dangers."—*Castlereagh Correspondence*, i. 4, 5.

CHAP. I.

1786.

reading man in that year." All contemporary accounts from his college friends agree in the same character. A picture of his mind at that period, still more curious and interesting, is yet extant in several letters to a near and dear female relative and friend much more advanced in years; some of which, without violating the confidence ever due to domestic and private communications, may, without impropriety, be given to the world as the earliest records of the opening of a mind destined to do such great things in after life.[1]*

[1] Dr Bushby, to Lord Londonderry, Aug. 6, 1840; Castlereagh Corresp. i. 5, 6.

10. His travels abroad, and first parliamentary contest.

The reason of Lord Castlereagh being taken from college at the early age of eighteen, was the anxiety of his father to secure for him a place in the Irish Parliament —an entrance into which was anticipated for his own county at no distant period. In the mean time he was sent to make the grand tour, then, as now, considered with justice as an indispensable requisite for the completion of the education and forming the manners of any young man intended for public life. In 1788 and 1789, accordingly, he went abroad and visited Paris, Geneva, Rome, Vienna, and the principal European cities. Neither the studies and habits of Cambridge, however, nor the attractions of the highest foreign society to which his rank, fine figure,

* "LORD CASTLEREAGH [aged seventeen] *to* LADY E. PRATT.

"*October* 28, 1786.

"MY DEAREST LADY ELIZABETH,—Being now completely settled at St John's, Cambridge, I sit down, this being *the first night I ever spent in my own house,* to thank you for your letter and neckcloths. As I know you wish to hear something of the reception we met with at Sudbourne (Lord Hertford's), I have the pleasure to tell you it was everything we could wish. Lord H. received us most cordially. The first day, when we arrived, we found him in the parlour. After sitting some time, my father and I went upstairs to take off our boots. When we came down, we found dinner on the table, and Lady Horatio Lincoln and Elizabeth in the room. Lord H. did not introduce us to any of them, so that we sat the whole time of dinner in the most formal manner you can imagine. For my own part, if I had been ever so well inclined to speak to them, I did not in the least know who they were: so that we sat in profound silence. However, after dinner, that formality wore off, and we were all very soon acquainted."

"HOLYHEAD, *Wednesday, 28th May* 1787.

"As soon as we got into Wales, such was the enchantment that we could hardly force ourselves through it. We passed four days in it deliciously: the weather has been charming, and the country in its highest beauty. We

and elegant manners, gave him an easy entrance, diverted his mind from politics, to which he evinced an early and unmistakable propensity. Instead of joining in the usual pleasures or amusements of his age and rank, he was continually studying the newspapers, devouring the debates in Parliament, and watching with intense anxiety, in common with the whole civilised world, the progress of the French Revolution, the deceitful dawn of which was beginning to be overcast with clouds. Above all, he evinced on all occasions the most earnest solicitude for the amelioration of the institutions of his own country, then overloaded with the abuses which ever attend the representative system among a people not fitted for its reception. There exists a most valuable letter of his to a confidential friend in January 1793, throwing an important light upon the condition of Ireland at that period,[1] and the reasons which rendered Lord Castlereagh so ardent a supporter of a parliamentary reform in Ireland

[1] Castlereagh Corresp. i. 5, 6.

next morning breakfasted in Llangollen, passing through that heavenly country along the banks of the Dee. It was more divine a thousand times than when I travelled it before. I went to inquire after Miss Butler and Miss H.: they desired to see us, and we went and stayed three or four hours with them. Our reception was the kindest possible. They inquired particularly for you and Lord C. They were attached to you, they told me, at first sight, and wish much for your return. We left them with regret, very much entertained with the singularity of their mode of thinking, and surprised, as you were, with their perfect ease and unaffected manner with strangers. We stayed long on Penmaen-Mawr, till we were worn out, rolling great stones down that immense precipice. Nothing can be more magnificent than seeing them bounding down, till at last all dashed to dust."

"BIRMINGHAM, *Friday night*, 1787.

"We went two miles to-day out of our way to see Shakespeare's tomb. I was well repaid. On it is this inscription:—

"'Stay, Passenger! Why goest thov by so fast?
Read, if thov canst, whom enviovs Death hath plast
Within this monvment: Shakspeare; with whome
Quick natvre dide: whose name doth deck ys Tombe
Far more than cost; sieth all yt he hath writt
Leaves living art bvt page to serve his witt.
Obiit 23 April 1616; æt. 53.'

"I have still some faint hopes left that this was the production of some *Irish* friend; for much as I am inclined to love this country's generosity, I have not so far expanded my heart as to incline to share that most unrivalled figure of speech with you."—LORD CASTLEREAGH *to* LADY ELIZABETH PRATT; *Birmingham, Friday night, April* 14, 1793.

CHAP. I.

1790.

11. Severe parliamentary contest in the county of Down. July 1790.

and the union with Great Britain. It is now for the first time given to the public.*

The marked predilection for political life which, Lord Castlereagh evinced, and those abilities for the discharge of its duties, which were conspicuous in his character, induced his father to take the earliest opportunity of bringing him into Parliament, which at that time, to natives of Ireland, was the one sitting in College Green, Dublin. An opening occurred ere long in his own county, that of

* "DUBLIN, 26*th January* 1793.

"MY DEAREST LORD,—I have been in some measure remiss in fulfilling my promise. My father wrote so fully to you on the politics of Ireland that I can only afford a repetition of his statements. By your letter of the 20th to him, which arrived last night, it is plain the news of our most important proceedings have not reached you. When they do, they will prove that your speculations in regard to the probable result of our session have not been well founded; for it is now evident that, so far from reform in general meeting with resistance, and particularly that of the representation, from the Parliament of this country, the whole is in train; and the latter especially supported by those immediately interested in resisting it—I mean the great borough proprietors. This, my dear Lord, is sufficient to show that your ideas upon Irish politics, though abstractly sound, are not the result of an accurate local knowledge of the country. Most assuredly you cannot entertain stronger ideas on the wisdom of resisting all changes than those gentlemen have uniformly done, and, added to an equal disposition, they have the most weighty of all inducements to decide their opposition—viz., personal interest. Yet these old sages have discovered that reform is a wise and necessary measure; and they, very prudently, would rather effect it themselves than let others plunge the country in confusion, or suffer the work to fall into other hands. Depend upon it, my dear Lord C., you must change your system with respect to Ireland; there is no alternative, now her independence is admitted, but to govern her by reason, *or unite her to Great Britain by force.* A middle path will not do. A government of gross corruption—for it is not a government of influence—extinguishing every possibility of parliamentary authority, will be no longer quietly endured. Give Ireland such a government as your own. When she abuses it, depend upon it you will then find a union a much more practicable measure; but as to continuing the present system, depend upon it it is no longer possible. Those whose daily bread is the corruption complained of, think so; is not that sufficient proof? It would require less force to unite the two kingdoms than to govern as heretofore. In the former case a short struggle might effect it, but in the latter it will require a perpetual military coercion; therefore, let them, if they will, run riot for a little time. I myself hope that this will not be the case, although there is certainly more danger than there would have been had the concession taken place some years sooner. But, at all events, let their misconduct, not their reasonable demands, be the ground of forcible interference. Under the spirit of the constitution they are justified in demanding change. When they have power they may abuse it—so may you; but when they are wild enough to do so, then your correction may be more reasonably

Down, in the north of Ireland, which led to an election contest of the severest kind, attended with important and lasting consequences to the Stewart family. That great county had been hitherto mainly in the hands of the Marquess of Downshire, whose family have there extensive estates; and that nobleman was desirous, when an election occurred in July 1790, of securing both seats for his nominee. This attempt was resisted by the Independent proprietors, who were anxious to emancipate the country

applied. I am afraid the question for your decision now is (what I always imagined it would be on the first critical occasion that presented itself) not what instructions you should send to Mr Hobert,* but what orders to my Lord Howe—provided it is your determination to resist and not to guide the storm. I am sure if that moment has not yet arrived it is not far distant; for I doubt exceedingly whether even your corruption, powerful though it may be, will be capable of prevailing upon Parliament to throw Ireland into confusion or to persuade gentlemen that it is better to purchase their boroughs and their emoluments than their estates. It is for you to determine whether you will embark in the reconquest of Ireland at the same time that you proceed against France and its principles.

"Your policy towards Ireland has been temporising. You have made it necessary for her to seize systematically an ungenerous moment to carry her object. Yet even at this moment there is but one voice, that when England draws the sword, that of Ireland is unsheathed with it. The wildest revolutionists have not held other language. You have attempted to support a system which your first difficulty compels you to abandon. Instead of concession, every point has been a matter of conquest, and discontent has been the consequence, when gratitude might have been the national feeling. You have tied the hands by closing the mouths of all your real friends in this country, and relied upon a parcel of sharks, who, now alarmed, for higher interests forsake you. So far have you pushed matters that, as landlords, we have no longer any influence in restraining the exertions of our tenantry to effect that which we cannot seriously tell them should be denied.

"But to forget what is past, let us consider what is to be done? Claims are coming from all ranks, both Catholic and Protestant. The rational principle appears to be to concede what shall conciliate a sufficient number to guard against tumult, and at the same time does not go to destroy the framework of the constitution. There appears to me this strong distinction between the dissatisfaction of the two sects, that the Protestants may be conciliated at the same time that the constitution is improved; the Catholics never can, by any concession which must not, sooner or later, tear down the Church or make the State their own. I believe that reform will effect itself either now or in a few years. If that be the case, and the election franchise is given to that body, a few years will make three-fourths of the constituency of Ireland Catholics. Can a Protestant superstructure long continue supported on such a base? With a reformed representation and a Catholic constituency, must not everything shortly follow? Can the Protestant Church remain the Establishment of a State of which they do not comprise an eighth part, which will be the

* The Irish Secretary.

CHAP. I. 1790.

from the influence of one family, and united their suffrages in favour of Mr Stewart (Lord Castlereagh) and Mr Ward, though the former was so young that he only attained the legal age of twenty-one during his canvass. The contest was carried on by both parties with the greatest keenness, and attended with enormous expense on either side. That which fell on Lord Londonderry was no less than £60,000—a clear proof how much some reform in the

case when the Catholics are coequal in political rights? At present they form the half, being as numerous as the Dissenters. This makes all the difference in the world; for enemies within and without the State tell very differently. The one destroys by *legislation*, the other by *rebellion*. You observe that we paint too strongly the danger of Protestant resentment and underrate Catholic anger. Although inferior in numbers, I consider the Protestants infinitely the more formidable body. They have thought longer on political subjects, and are excited to a higher pitch than the Catholics; besides, I do not think you are likely to appease the latter by any concession you are about to make to them. Nothing short of coequal rights will satisfy them, and these you cannot yield if you wish to preserve your Church and State; for in order to preserve the Church, the patronage of the Crown must be employed in its support. Therefore although the Catholics may have equal rights, they cannot have equal enjoyments. Here a new grievance presents itself, which nothing but the destruction of your Episcopacy and the partition of the State can redress. Depend upon it, they will struggle as much for the practical enjoyment, as they now do for the theoretical privileges, of the constitution; therefore you cannot encourage them with any hope of satisfying them unless you tolerate State dissolution. You have made an unwise alliance with that body, if it is not irretrievable. I think you had yet better decline the consummation. Rather strengthen the combination upon its own principles, and keep a hostile principle out of it. Give them anything rather than the franchise, for it forces everything else. Property will feebly resist a principle so powerful. The Dissenters having carried their reform, will have no interest in pulling down your Church, for they cannot expect to set up their own. They hate tithes, so do the Episcopalians. I think you are unnecessarily alarmed lest a coalition should take place between the Levellers and the Catholics. If the Government is purged a little, you will find very few Levellers, if any, from principle. The mob, when released from law, let their religion be what it may, are Levellers. These Government need not dread, if it be supported by its own character, and by the men of weight acting upon principle apparently more pure than its accustomed guardians. But, at all events, you must make friends *somewhere*, and to decide which shall be preferred, is only to recollect that the petition of grievances on the part of the Catholics must, from the nature of things, comprehend every article contained in that of the Protestants, with the addition of several peculiar to themselves; and that the closing prayer is, give us the Government at once, or give us the franchise as the means of conquering it. If you give the franchise, reflect on the multitude of reformers you create; for as long as the representation stands as it now is, the privilege is inefficient. This might be good policy, if you could hope to damp the ardour for reform in the Protestants alarmed for their ascendancy, but that moment is passed. They have taken the step, and they claim emancipation for the Catholics and repre-

representative system was at that time required in Ireland. Lord Castlereagh was returned with Lord Downshire's nominee, so that success was equally divided.* But it was considered a great triumph to have rescued one seat from the preponderating influence, in a great county, of one family. This struggle occasioned great excitement in Ireland, and first brought Lord Castlereagh, who was the popular candidate, into public notice. His courteous manner and ready elocution on the hustings and else-

sentation for all, though I am persuaded, were they gratified themselves, they would give you very little trouble on behalf of their Catholic allies. The Protestants and Catholics are by the ears in four counties, the Catholics in large parties breaking open houses in search of arms. The army the other night killed forty-seven, and took several prisoners. The number killed was at first stated as fewer, but several have since died of their wounds. The county Down have drawn up strong resolutions in favour of reform. To give you some idea of the spirit which prevails,—Hillsborough went there and made a long speech against reform, but when the question was put, although the meeting was prodigiously numerous, and attended by many of his own party, he could carry with him but two votes, the one a revenue officer, the other a boy. He left them in a violent rage. They talk here of a farther adjournment and of a new lord-lieutenant. If I may judge of Lord B.'s † opinions from conversations I have had with him, he inclines to resist everything. For this reason I fear one will not have to lament his departure. My dear lord, I have scrawled this in a coffee-room surrounded by drunken men, so that you must expect it to partake of the surrounding confusion.—I am, &c.,

"R. STEWART.

"*P.S.*—The convention at Dungannon goes on. It will be composed of delegates from every county in Ulster, elected by parochial electors deputed by the parishioners. Many respectable gentlemen, all the men of consequence in my county, are accepting delegations, in order that that they may not fall into worse hands. They wish to go no farther than thank Parliament for admitting the principle of reform, convey the wishes of the people, and wait the result of their labours. I still think, if Parliament appears to hang back, they may enter into specifics and proceed. R. S."—*Londonderry Papers, MS.*

Nothing can be more characteristic of Lord Castlereagh's mind than this early and very remarkable letter written in his twenty-fourth year. It portrays a mind eminently practical, yet reflecting; noways averse to reform of real grievances, but anticipating the consequences of such concessions, and looking the future boldly in the face, whatever present obloquy the measures adopted might cause. It may be added, that many of the remarks in this remarkable letter, written in the confusion of a coffee-house, have proved prophetic.

* The poll lasted forty-two days, and the numbers at its close stood thus: —Hon. A. Hill, 3534; Hon. R. Stewart, 3114; Hon. E. Ward, 2958; George Mathers, 2223. It is no wonder Lord Castlereagh (Hon. R. Stewart) was a reformer at this period.—*Cornwallis Correspondence*, ii. 359, note.

† Buckingham.

CHAP. I. 1790.

where during the contest excited much attention, and caused him to be looked up to as one of the most rising young men of the day. This contest, however, was attended with very serious consequences to his family; for its expenses were so great as to stop the building of a large family mansion which his father at that time projected. The kind-hearted and patriotic nobleman, however, had no hesitation in making this sacrifice for his son and the independence of his county. To pay off the expenses of the election, he sold off a valuable collection of old family portraits, and lived for the remainder of his life in a rambling house, made up of an old barn with a few rooms added.[1]

[1] Castlereagh Corresp. i. 6, 7.

12. Lord Castlereagh enters the militia, and marries the daughter of the Earl of Buckinghamshire.

Shortly after this severe struggle, which ended thus favourably in effecting a fair division of the seats for the county of Down between the Downshire and Stewart families, Lord Castlereagh, still the Hon. Mr Stewart only, entered the militia, which at that time was everywhere raised in consequence of the breaking out of the war with France, in February 1793; and, on 26th April of that year, he was appointed lieutenant-colonel of the Londonderry Militia, by his uncle the Right Hon. Thomas Conolly, the lieutenant-colonel commandant of the regiment. In the following year a still more important event took place, attended through life with the most important consequences both to his fortune and happiness. This was his marriage to the Lady Emily Anne Hobart, youngest daughter and coheiress of John, second Earl of Buckinghamshire, which took place on 17th March 1794. To personal charms of no ordinary kind, and a commanding figure, this accomplished lady united a grace of manners and amiability of disposition, which rendered her the ornament of every society in which they moved, while they fitted her to take her proper place in the elevated Court circles to which his high position in public life ultimately raised him.[2] It was not less material to his domestic happiness, that her congenial disposition and kindness of feeling rendered her his constant partner

[2] Castlereagh Corresp. i. 7; Burke's Peerage.

in all the acts of kindness and generosity by which Lord Castlereagh's private life was always distinguished.

13. His declaration in favour of Reform.

It may seem strange to those who have been taught to regard Lord Castlereagh as the ally of despots, and the uncompromising enemy of the liberties of the people, to learn that, on occasion of the Downshire election, he not only declared himself an advocate for parliamentary reform, but gave a written pledge to that effect on the hustings. Possibly, when it is recollected that the election in which he was then engaged cost his father £60,000, it was not unnatural that he should have felt that some change in the mode of conducting elections was desirable. His character, however, was too disinterested, and his principles of action too elevated, to permit it to be for a moment supposed that any such considerations influenced his opinions either then or at any subsequent time. The true reason of his supporting parliamentary reform in 1790, when this election took place, and opposing it in after-life, was that, nominally the same, the political constitution of Ireland was at that period entirely different from that of either England or Scotland. This arose from the *exclusion of Roman Catholics* from the suffrage, which was only removed by Mr Pitt's Act in 1793. As the great majority of the Irish tenants belonged to the Church of Rome, this invidious exclusion not only shut out the greater part of the people from any share in the election of members of Parliament, but it threw the command of the popular branch of the Legislature entirely into the hands of the Protestant landlords, for the most part the holders of the forfeited estates of the old Catholic proprietors, and who, both on that account, and from the effects of religious divisions, were too often animated by hostile feelings towards their Catholic tenantry, and actuated by an adverse interest. Lord Castlereagh felt too strongly the injustice and evil consequence of this line of demarcation not to be the steady supporter of reform *till it was removed*. When this was done by the Act of 1793, admit-

CHAP. I.

1793.

ting all Catholic freeholders to the franchise, he declared he was satisfied, and would go no farther. This change of opinion, or rather change of circumstances and consistency of opinion, took place in 1793, four years before he took office in 1797; and when in the Irish House of Commons he generally voted with the Opposition. In these views, he had the concurrence and support of his private friend, but political opponent, Mr Ponsonby, also destined to future eminence, who declared at the same time that he would support the cause of parliamentary reform in Ireland, but by no means consent to a change in the English House of Commons.[1]

[1] Castlereagh Corresp. i. 7-9.

14. His debut in the Irish Parliament.

In the interval, which lasted four years, between his entry into the Irish House of Commons and his admission into public office, Lord Castlereagh was an active member of the Legislature, and took an especial and warm interest in every measure which promised to extend the resources or open a field for the industry of his country. He was a warm supporter of the Act of 1793, which gave Catholic freeholders the right of voting for members of Parliament, and expressed the greatest satisfaction at the success of that measure. Throughout life he continued the steady and consistent supporter of the Catholic claims for a removal of all their remaining disabilities both in and out of Parliament. And when the question came on in the House of Commons in Dublin, whether Ireland had a right to trade to India notwithstanding the monopoly of the English East India Company, he espoused the popular side, and supported it with a vigour of thought and power of reasoning which commanded general attention, and elicited warm expressions of approbation from several distinguished members of the House, in particular Lord Charlemont.[2]

[2] Castlereagh Corresp. i. 8, 9.

At first Lord Castlereagh generally voted with the Opposition in the first Parliament; but more stirring times were now approaching, and the violence of the popular party in Ireland at once detached nearly all persons of

15. Dangers of Ireland in 1793, and Lord Castlereagh's views on it.

property from their side, and induced the Government to recruit their ranks by those young men who might seem to be best qualified by their character and abilities to make head against the dangers with which the country was threatened. The French Revolution having drawn England, notwithstanding all Mr Pitt's efforts to avert the calamity, into a war with France, defensive measures became necessary in Ireland, as in other parts of the empire. How to effect this object, however, in consistency with the general safety of that part of the King's dominions, was no easy matter; for not only had the system of volunteers in 1782 proved eminently hazardous, but, under the impulse communicated everywhere to democratic ambition by the French Revolution, the whole discontented parties in Ireland—Catholics, Presbyterians, Dissenters, and Republicans—had united together for the purpose of extorting from Government, in a moment of peril, and when embarrassed with a formidable foreign foe, concessions which would entirely change the constitution, and convert it from a mixed monarchy into a separate republic, or a monarchy in which the real power was vested in the people. This alarming state of matters awakened, as well it might, the anxious attention of Lord Castlereagh, and first led him to modify the views as to the practicability of disarming discontent by concession, which he had, at his first entrance into public life, been led to form. Government resolved, on Mr Pitt's suggestion, to disband the volunteers, and call out the militia on the same footing as in England and Scotland. Of this measure Lord Castlereagh cordially approved, although it was a bold and dangerous one, and might have led to an immediate collision, for which the country, as usual after a long peace, was very little prepared. His views on the subject are fully explained in the following very interesting letter to Earl Camden, of 17th April 1793, in which the manliness of his character in taking his share in the odium of a necessary but unpopular measure is strongly evinced:—

CHAP. I.

1793.

16. Lord Castlereagh's views on the subject.

"The militia being an unpopular measure, although my opinion was strongly against the policy of the moment they had chosen for arranging it, yet I wish to bear my full share of any odium which may attend it. The measure being decided on, I shall strive to reconcile my friends to it, convinced it will prove a most valuable advantage to Ireland when effectually and respectably established. Whatever other obligations we may owe to our present Government—whatever favours may be extended to us in consequence of the Convention now sitting in London upon Irish affairs—I shall always acknowledge, as an important advantage, their having completely suppressed our volunteers. Those armed associations, when headed by men of property, although highly unconstitutional, were harmless; but of late the danger from them has become imminent. They were in the hands of low men, who arrayed them avowedly for the purpose of intimidating Government into a reform. They were providing themselves with ammunition, and might have been led into any excess by their Jacobin leaders. Since the proclamation appeared against the town of Belfast, I have not heard that any corps have appeared under arms; nor will they, I am persuaded, if Government continue to act with the same firmness. Our militia will be a considerable charge on our falling revenue: notwithstanding that, as the bill was passed with such a general concurrence, it will be carried into effect. However, the necessity for it may be less pressing, from a change of circumstances on the Continent. My opinion has invariably been, that the country could never have any security against sedition as long as volunteering was tolerated, nor its internal peace be firmly established till a militia took place. I was apprehensive that the experiment was a hazardous one at so critical a period. However, it has succeeded, and I hope the whole benefits will be drawn from so fortunate an event.[1] I trust, however, that one happy change which has taken place in the aspect of Irish affairs, will not induce the Administration to with-

[1] Lord Castlereagh to Earl Camden, April 3, 1793; Londonderry Papers, MS.

hold indulgences which it was in their contemplation to grant at a moment of more danger. Let us, for God's sake, have a liberal settlement. It will, I am persuaded, unite more cordially the two countries, will deprive a vindictive Opposition of their ground of attack, and attach to Government many men who now wish them well, but cannot act with them as a party, on constitutional points."

17. Lord Castlereagh's views of the French war in 1793.

Foreign affairs at this period came every day more strongly to rivet the attention of the nation; and Lord Castlereagh, it may well be believed, was no unconcerned spectator of the events on the Continent. Among the rest, the surrender of Toulon to Lord Hood, on August 7, excited greatly his attention; and on the 25th of September he wrote thus on the subject to Lord Camden:— "While at Ords the news of the surrender of Toulon reached me. Certainly, if we were desired to choose an advantage after Brest, it would be the harbour now in our hands. The only question is, whether the terms on which it has been obtained do not detract from the value of the acquisition. It is idle, perhaps, to discuss this, for certain it is that Lord Hood could not reduce it by force, and therefore could not expect it to surrender at discretion. However, we may be thankful that so important a proportion of their navy is in our possession at this moment. If their troops drive us from this place, we shall never suffer their ships to fall into their hands. We are pledged to restore them when a settled monarchy is re-established; and even if this should happen, it will, I trust, be a government too much exhausted to be very formidable to us. The only thing, my dear lord, which really dispirits me is, the unprecedented struggle of order against anarchy, and the unfortunate facility with which France recruits her army as fast as the sword exterminates it. A few days transforms their ragamuffins into troops, which are not contemptible even when opposed to the best soldiers in Europe. They make up in madness and numbers what they want in discipline. This is by no means the case with the Allies.

CHAP. I. 1793.

The havoc of war and disease is not so soon replaced. Unless civil war reduces the French, I see no end to their resources; for as long as there is a mob to rob proprietors, the whole capital of the nation will be directed against their assailants. While there is money to distribute, or paper to represent it, in a country where manufactures are idle, soldiers will not be wanting. In fact, it is a battle between a fair honest gentleman and a sharper with loaded dice.

18. Continued.

"Yet still the battle is inevitable, and must be persisted in as long as Brabant is exposed, or the French Jacobins in a state to reduce the governments of Europe to their own level. Their mode of carrying on war is so new and alarming, that were their attention not distracted by internal defences, I should tremble lest they should set a force in motion which nothing could withstand. It is astonishing to me how they organise, victual, and arm the infinite number which they send into the field. Our government in Ireland cannot accoutre the small force it has to direct; we were obliged to leave our cartridges at home, or carry them in our pockets, for want of belts. Since civil discord is more to be reckoned on than external operations, I am in hopes that Lord Hood's moderate declaration may kindle fresh flames against the Convention. It is by holding forth to the people the combined powers in the most terrifying point of view that they keep alive the enthusiasm which supports them. His conduct seems calculated to recall them from despair; and his letters are sufficiently grounded not to seem to have authority to pledge his nation to any specific form of government when applied to France: he only covenants to restore Toulon when required by a regulated monarchy. The part of the campaign which remains is, in my mind, the most formidable. It is the season when France can feed, and consequently set in motion, the greatest number of forces; besides, their strength becomes the accumulated effect and discipline of many months, which crumbles

away in the winter season. God forbid that it should close with another Jemappes; it might give us a warmer winter in this country than I ever hope to see. A defeat in a pitched battle is fatal to the Allies. Their strength in the field once overthrown, their country is overcome: not so with their opponents; a defeat is soon repaired, and its effects counteracted, by the endless fortifications which protect their frontiers. In short, my dear lord, I do not like a retreat to which we have been driven, because I know it produces a mechanical effect upon our enemy, and gives them a most formidable confidence in themselves. The present moment seems so critical that I cannot be at rest. The tranquillity of Europe is at stake, and we contend with an opponent whose strength we have no means of measuring. *It is the first time* that *all* the population and *all* the wealth of a great kingdom has been concentrated in the field: *what may be the result is beyond my perception.* . . . I know no one now alive so capable of advising mankind upon government as yourself; the more so, as I am convinced what comes from you would be received with a confidence no other politician could give it. Everything that has happened in France is the consequence of their first system: it will be acted over again in these countries if ever we should be mad enough to adopt similar principles. I am afraid I wear you out, my dear lord; reflections on these subjects when indulged in are endless. I wish to God I could enjoy them with you on the water at Brighton!"[1]

[1] Lord Castlereagh to Earl Camden, Sept. 25, 1793; Londonderry Papers, MS.

19. Value of the political opinions expressed in these letters.

The value of this letter, as affording a measure of the political wisdom and foresight of Lord Castlereagh, will not be properly appreciated unless it is compared with the results with which the world unfortunately has had too good reason to become acquainted, and it is also recollected that it was the production of a man of twenty-four, in the third month of the war, and when nearly all his contemporaries, even of the very highest intellectual grade of all parties, were entirely at fault in

CHAP. I.

1793.

regard to the probable results of the French Revolution. At the time when Lord Castlereagh in confidence penned these lines to his grandfather, Earl Camden, Mr Burke had just published his *Reflections on the French Revolution*, in which he prophesied that France, parcelled out by the fury of faction into little separate republics, "might henceforth be blotted out of the map of Europe." Mr Fox was maintaining in Parliament that Europe had no cause to apprehend danger hereafter from the aggression either of *France or Russia*, and that "the French Revolution was the most stupendous monument of human wisdom ever raised on the basis of public virtue in any age or country." For long after, Mr Pitt repeatedly said in his place in Parliament that he confidently anticipated the extinction of the power of France by the failure of their finances, and the breaking down of the system of assignats. Which of these great men was really right?

20. Lord Castlereagh's views of affairs in Ireland in 1794.

During the years 1793 and 1794 Lord Castlereagh served regularly with his militia regiment, and was on that account in a great measure withdrawn from the scene of parliamentary strife. In the interval a considerable relaxation was made in the penal code, and the Roman Catholic freeholders were admitted to the franchise—a change of which Lord Castlereagh entirely approved, but which he justly foresaw rendered necessary a union of the two countries, and the repeal of the remaining Catholic disabilities unavoidable; of both of which measures he was ever after a firm and consistent supporter. These first approaches to a more liberal policy in regard to Ireland were attended with a very beneficial effect, which is strongly portrayed in the following letter to Lord Camden, of date 17th October 1794:—"The situation of the country has greatly changed within the last two years. I am happy to tell you that the situation of this part of the empire has since that time much changed for the better. The turbulent spirit of the people, no longer agitated by conventionism and volunteer associations, has

sensibly abated. The militia army is faithful and efficient. There is but one feeling towards England, and scarcely a dissentient in the House of Commons as to the original necessity of the war and its present vigorous prosecution. Some slight reflections are, however, thrown out against it, which make me very anxious that it should be fully discussed and understood. The investigation of the subject in the English Parliament, I am persuaded, has answered the best purposes in carrying forward the affections of the people. Here the question is little understood. Many imagine we are at war merely because Great Britain is at war—that is, as they conceive, because Mr Pitt chose it; they imagine that England was the first aggressor—that she is united with all the despots of Europe to enslave France. They have not had the dangers of Jacobin and revolutionary politics explained to them as the people of England have. They believe France anxiously desires peace, and is disposed to observe it when made. Such is the delusion into which they have been led by the Jacobin writers.

21. Continued.

"The unwillingness of Government to investigate the question of the war will not convict them. Never did administration stand on ground so strong, and never, in my mind, was it so much their policy to provoke discussion and to brave all opposition by giving all documents and challenging all investigation. But that openness of conduct which Mr Pitt invariably adopts in the British Parliament is not as yet a part of the Irish system. The Ministers of this country think everything is to be done in Parliament by a majority, and out of it by a good dinner. They are so much in the habit of being wrong that they never can persuade themselves that they are in the right. They are so much used to fight upon bad, that they do not know the value of good grounds. They resort to the same miserable cavil, and are as much afraid of discussion as if it must prove inevitable condemnation. However, we shall go on very well, and

CHAP. I. 1794.

give our enemies a warm reception if they visit us. Our army contains 2000 regulars and 16,000 militia. We are to raise £1,800,000, which is a large sum in this country, being near two years' income, but still we are to accomplish it without laying heavy burdens on the people. I am very anxious to obtain leave of absence for three weeks, to indulge myself in seeing you before I am forced to return to my regiment, but whether I shall be able to effect it is uncertain."[1]

[1] Lord Castlereagh to Earl Camden, Oct. 17, 1794; MS. Londonderry Papers.

22. Changes in the Irish Government at this period, and appointment of Lords Westmoreland and Fitzwilliam.

The Marquess of Buckingham, Lord-Lieutenant, had a rupture with the Irish Parliament on the Regency question, in consequence of which he resigned, and was succeeded by the Earl of Westmoreland, whose appointment was the signal for fierce contests between the Government and the people. The Dissenters of the north, stimulated by the passions consequent on the bursting forth of the French Revolution, coalesced with the Roman Catholics, whose causes of discontent were of much older standing and better founded, and both united in a loud and menacing demand for reform. This cry was the more formidable that it was joined in by the armed volunteers, who, since the disastrous era of the American war, had assumed a most alarming attitude in Ireland. The aspect of affairs in 1793 became so threatening that the English Government deemed it advisable to make a change, and Earl Fitzwilliam was sent over to succeed Lord Westmoreland. The former nobleman came over avowedly as the organ of a conciliatory policy; and his mission was in conformity with the opinion so strongly expressed by Lord Castlereagh in the letters already quoted, to concede Catholic emancipation and such a measure of Parliamentary reform as might be consistent with the preservation of order and of the monarchical constitution in Church and State.[2]

[2] Castlereagh Corresp. i. 10, 11.

His arrival, heralded by the journals and associations which supported these objects, excited great interest, and for a while stilled the violence of party. These favour-

able dispositions were increased by the appointment of Mr Grattan to an important place in the Administration; and he announced, in an eloquent speech, the intentions of the Government, which were all that the liberal party could wish. Such was the general enthusiasm excited by this declaration that, on the motion of Mr Grattan, the House of Commons voted £3,000,000 to the English Government to carry on the war—a very large sum to be given by a country the revenue of which was only £1,800,000 a-year. It soon appeared, however, that these flattering prospects were not likely to be realised. The Protestant party in Great Britain took the alarm at the strong expressions used by Mr Grattan as to the entire concession of the Catholic claims, against which the Orangemen of the north of Ireland and the great majority of the inhabitants of Great Britain were equally united. So strong did this feeling become that the English Government deemed it necessary to draw back. They accordingly declared that the promises of Earl Fitzwilliam, as announced by Mr Grattan, had been made without any authority, and that he had unadvisedly pledged them to a course which was inconsistent with the maintenance of the Protestant constitution in Church and State, and the permanent connection of Great Britain and Ireland. The consequence, of course, was, that Lord Fitzwilliam was recalled, and with him Mr Grattan and the whole Liberal Administration went out of office. He was succeeded by Earl Camden as Lord-Lieutenant, and Mr Pelham, afterwards Lord Chichester, as Chief Secretary. This was not done till *after* the liberal grant of £3,000,000 had passed both Houses of the Irish Parliament. It must be confessed that the good faith of the British Government would have been more conspicuous if the disavowal had *preceded* the demand for that sum.[1]

23. Lord Fitzwilliam's liberal policy and his dismissal; succeeded by Lord Camden.

[1] Castlereagh Corresp. i. 10, 11.

The altered policy of Government appeared on the very first night of the official appearance of Mr Pelham

CHAP. I. 1793.

24. Declaration of Earl Camden against further concessions.

as Chief Secretary in Parliament. Lord Camden, the new Lord-Lieutenant, was friendly to the extension of the elective franchise to the Roman Catholic voters, but decidedly opposed to the Catholics being allowed seats in Parliament; and he was averse, after the franchise had been conceded by Mr Pitt's Act in 1793, to any further concession at a time when the minds of men were so much heated as they were in every country, and especially in Ireland, by the doctrines set afloat by the French Revolution.* The tone of Government soon was made manifest. Mr Grattan brought forward the Catholic question—that is, the right of Catholics *to sit* in Parliament; and Mr Pelham immediately rose in reply, and stated, with great heat and emphasis, that "concessions to the Catholics seemed only to increase

* Earl Camden's real opinion on Irish politics at this time was expressed in the following confidential letter, dated 4th February 1793, to Lord Castlereagh, in answer to the long one, already quoted, by Lord Castlereagh, of 26th January 1793:—"I am sorry to confess my ideas on the state of your country are very gloomy; and I have no conception, in these times, when rights are pushed to the utmost extremity, and reform knows no bounds, of giving to any nation, and less to one of the description of yours, whose characteristic is certainly not moderation, the sort of latitude which the questions about to take place in Ireland will give them. I inherit, and, upon consideration, am clearly of your father's opinion, that Ireland must be our province, if she will not be persuaded to a union; and *if she would, she ought and would enjoy complete and reciprocal benefits with this country.* This is my opinion, but in the present state of politics there, it would be dangerous either to maintain that opinion or to act upon it; and the desirable thing at present is, to quiet and satisfy the minds of moderate men such as you and your father; for you give a credit to those of a more violent disposition, who will unite with you till you are alarmed, and will then have gained strength and consequence enough to do without you. At the same time that we in England give you that SATISFACTION, we should take great care not to give from ourselves that degree of command and influence in Ireland which is essential both to your prosperity and our consequence. The reform of Parliament must now be carried, and if it can be done with moderation, I am by no means sure it may not be attended with advantage; but I think it should be undertaken, if that be possible, by the joint efforts of both the Government and Opposition. As the Protestants will then be indulged, the Roman Catholics must have, from their numbers and the promises they have received, some concessions; and if you give a certain latitude to them of voting for members, the *intelligible* grievance of having no representation will be done away; and I should hope they would be indulged no farther, and by no means be suffered to sit in the House of Commons."—LORD CAMDEN *to* LORD CASTLEREAGH, *Berkeley Square, February* 4, 1793; *MS. Londonderry Papers.*

their demands; that what they now sought was incompatible with the existence of a Protestant constitution: that concession must stop somewhere; it had already reached the utmost limit—it could not be allowed to proceed—and here he would plant his foot, and never consent to recede an inch farther." The debate, which was conducted with great warmth, continued till eight on the following morning, when the motion was lost by a considerable majority. From that moment a rupture became unavoidable, for both parties were equally determined, and the sword alone could determine between them.[1]

[1] Castlereagh Corresp. i. 12.

25. Appointment of Lord Castlereagh as Keeper of the Seal. Aug. 9, 1796.

Probably, in this emphatic and determined announcement, Mr Pelham, in his turn, had exceeded his instructions, or misunderstood the real object of Government, for he soon after withdrew from his duties and returned to England. The urgency of affairs required that some one should forthwith be appointed to discharge the duties of that arduous and important office. From his intimate acquaintance with Lord Castlereagh, who, in the same year, for the first time assumed that title by the promotion of his father to the rank of earl in 1796, Lord Camden at once turned his eyes to that young nobleman to hold the office of Keeper of the Privy Seal, which happened to be vacant, and with it, discharge, *ad interim*, during Mr Pelham's absence, the duties of Chief Secretary. This appointment took place in February 1797, and this at once introduced him into public life, from which he never receded till his dying hour. Though not discharging the duties of his office, Mr Pelham continued to hold it till April 1799, when he resigned; and, on the recommendation of Lord Cornwallis, Lord Castlereagh was appointed Chief Secretary. From the time of his appointment as Lord Keeper, however, Lord Castlereagh discharged the whole duties of Secretary, and they were of a most arduous kind; for they occurred during the Rebellion of 1798, and the French invasion in the same year

Feb. 17, 1797.

April 17, 1799.

CHAP. I. 1793.

—the most critical and perilous era of Irish history. The recent revelations which have come out, especially in the Castlereagh and Cornwallis Correspondence, and Wolfe Tone's Memoirs, have demonstrated that this crisis was of a much more violent and dangerous kind than was ever imagined by the world generally at the time; and its difficulty and importance will not be adequately appreciated without a brief sketch of the designs and resources of the Irish revolutionary leaders at that period.[1]

[1] Burke's Peerage (Londonderry); Castlereagh Corresp. i. 12, 13.

26. Origin of the Irish revolutionary troubles, and wretched former government of the country.

The first germs of the Irish Rebellion appeared in 1778, when, in consequence of the withdrawal of nearly the whole English corps from the island, during the exigencies of the American war, a favourable opportunity seemed to present itself for overturning the Government and dissolving the connection with England. As not unusual in such cases, the first advances of revolution were made under the veil of loyalty, and it was under the pretext of preserving the empire that the most effectual steps were taken for its dismemberment. The state of Ireland and its government, at that period, was as deplorable as can well be conceived. The grossest corruption pervaded every department of the State. The state of the representation, which excluded the Catholics alike from the elective franchise and the right to sit in either House of Parliament, gave the government at the Castle of Dublin the entire command of the legislature, and enabled them to quash any attempt at inquiry or redress by decisive majorities in both Houses. Parliament met only once in two years, and a perpetual Mutiny Bill relieved them from any necessity of assembling the House more frequently. The real interests of the country were seldom attended to by this packed oligarchical minority, which had got possession of the powers of Government. In a word, Ireland at that period, though its constitution in form was the same as that of England, exhibited a picture of a country combining all the evils of despotism with all the deep-

seated corruption of unchecked representation, and justified the saying of the Czar Nicholas on the Polish constitution established by the Congress of Vienna—"I can understand a despotism, for I myself am born and compelled to act in it; I can understand a republic, for the world has afforded many examples of such; but a constitutional monarchy, governed by corruption, I do not understand; I had enough of it in Poland."[1]

[1] Marquis Custine, iv. 126; Cornwallis Corresp. ii. 337.

27. Armed volunteers of 1782.

So widespread and general was the corruption of the Irish Government at this period, that it had come to unite nearly all classes, except the dominant minority, in a league for its removal. In an incredibly short space of time, forty-two thousand volunteers were in arms in the island; and as the Government imprudently allowed the popular leaders to get the entire command of the movement, and the corps all appointed their own officers, these forces soon became extremely formidable. Lord Charlemont was chosen general, and for a time the persons enrolled were extremely assiduous in discharging their military duties, and ere long acquired a surprising degree of efficiency. The object of this was to overawe the Government, and render the force an object of dread before its real purpose was revealed. Gradually, however, when efficiency had been attained, the real purpose was disclosed. Politics came to engross its attention more than arms. Delegates were appointed to discuss public affairs, who met in Dublin, and began to exercise the functions, as they imitated the form, of Parliament. So little were the secret designs of the popular leaders understood at this period, that the names of several stanch Conservatives, though true patriots, were to be found among the delegates. Among the rest were those of the Hon. Robert Stewart, afterwards the first Lord Londonderry, and father of the object of the present biography, and Mr Corry, who became Irish Chancellor of the Exchequer. The persons at the head of the movement were the Hon. Frederick Harvey, son of the Earl of Bristol, Bishop of

CHAP. I.

1783.

Derry, and the Right Hon. Henry Flood. The former prelate, in 1783, travelled with an escort of twenty volunteers, and had sentries at his door, like a general officer; the latter came to the House of Commons in full uniform, on 29th November 1783, to propose a scheme framed by the Convention, which had declared its sittings permanent till the motion was disposed of. It was rejected by a majority of 158 to 49. This check prevented an immediate outbreak; and several of the reasonable and just demands of the delegates having at the same time been conceded by the British Parliament, particularly that which related to the removal of the restrictions on the importation of Irish produce into Great Britain, the Convention gradually sank in importance; and, during the peace which followed the American war, was hardly ever heard of.[1]

[1] Cornwallis Corresp. ii. 338; Wolfe Tone's Memoirs, ii. 197.

28. Organisation of the United Irishmen in 1791.

This spirit of resistance to the British Government, though for the time lulled, was not extinct. The machinery of the delegates and Convention was still kept up, and the leaders calmly waited the arrival of more favourable times to renew their agitation. The French Revolution speedily accomplished this object. Under the influence of the prodigious excitement which it occasioned over all the world, the spirit of resistance to the English Government revived, and became more intense than ever in Ireland. A society of "United Irishmen" was established in Belfast in 1791, the ostensible object of which was to bring about parliamentary reform—the real one, to establish a republic independent of Great Britain. By the rules of this body, which bore the true revolutionary type, no meeting of primary members was to consist of more than twelve; and five of these primary meetings were represented by a member in the committee, which was invested with the entire direction of their affairs. From each of these committees a deputy was to attend in a superior body; one or two deputies from these composed a county committee; two from every county committee constituted a provincial one; and this last elected five

persons to superintend the whole business of the union. This provisional government was elected by ballot, and the names of its members were only communicated to the secretaries of the provisional committees, who were officially intrusted with the scrutiny of votes. Thus, though the sway of the ruling committee was unbounded and its agency universal, its members and its seat of government were alike concealed, and the great object of revolutionary government was attained, that of vesting absolute authority in unknown hands. The military organisation was arranged in the same way. A committee, consisting of twelve, chose a sergeant; ten sergeants chose a captain; ten captains a colonel. The signs of being united are, The hands clasped. Answer, The right hand to the left hip. The words, "Be steady." Answer, "I am determined to free my country or die—liberty! liberty!"[1]

[1] Ann. Reg. 1798, 154-157; Mem. Fitzgerald, i. 165, 166; Castlereagh Corresp. i. 189.

29. Real objects of this movement.

Liberation from tithes and dues to the Protestant clergy, and the restoration of the Roman Catholic faith as that of the nation, formed the objects held out to the multitude by this association. Parliamentary reform was the lure presented to the higher orders as the inducement most likely to enlist persons of station and influence on the Liberal side under their banners. The real objects of the chiefs of the conspiracy were very different. They were to overthrow the Protestant government and monarchical constitution, separate Ireland altogether and permanently from Great Britain, and establish a democratic Hibernian republic in close alliance with the great democracy in France. These ulterior objects might long have remained unknown, and have been only guessed at from their actions, so stringent were the precautions taken against their discovery, were it not for the imprudent zeal of the biographers of the leaders of the movement, who, blinded by enthusiasm for the objects of their narrative, have furnished proofs of it which a more judicious reserve would have suffered to remain in obscurity.[2]

[2] Wolfe Tone's Mem. ii. 371, 378; Lord Edward Fitzgerald's Memoirs, by Moore, i. 165; Castlereagh Corresp. i. 189; Cornwallis Corresp. ii. 338.

This great and formidable movement was at first shared

CHAP. I.

1798.

30. Division of Catholics and Protestants, and rise of Orangemen.

in alike by the Presbyterians of the north and the Roman Catholics over the whole country; and if the United Irishmen had remained as steadily united as they were at first, it might, in a moment of difficulty or disaster, have led to the severance of Ireland from Great Britain, and its permanent subjection to the tyranny of the French democracy. But fortunately this catastrophe was prevented by the divisions in Ireland itself. For once religious dissension produced a beneficial result—it saved the empire from dismemberment. The necessity under which they lay of forwarding the ambitious views of the Romish priesthood, introduced the apple of discord into a body of men banded together for revolutionary purposes, and who, if they had held together, would have probably proved irresistible. "It is," says Lord Castlereagh, "a Jacobinical conspiracy throughout the kingdom, pursuing its object chiefly with Popish instruments; the heated bigotry of this sect being better suited to the purpose of the republican leaders than the cold, reasoning disaffection of the northern Presbyterians."[1] The open avowal of their intention to suppress the Protestant faith, and re-establish the Romish creed in its stead, before long alienated the Protestants in every part of the country; who, seeing the dagger at their throats, had no resource but to abandon the Catholics, and enter into a league for their common defence. This led to the ORANGE ASSOCIATION, intended to support the Protestant faith, and which, as a necessary consequence, fell into a close alliance with, and entire dependence on, Great Britain. Such was the effect of this change, that in the province of Ulster alone, where the United Irishmen at first boasted they had 150,000 of their associates, there was soon an overwhelming majority of the Orange party, and it thenceforth became the principal seat of the loyal minority, who aimed at upholding the Protestant faith and British connection. There can be no doubt that this division in the ranks of the once United Irishmen had a material

[1] Lord Castlereagh to Mr Wickham, June 12, 1798; Castlereagh Cor. i. 219.

effect on the future fate of the insurrection. But, in the first instance, it very seriously added to the difficulties of Government, and augmented the embarrassment with which Lord Castlereagh had to contend. The passions of the loyal defenders of the throne were soon as violently excited as those of their opponents, and the horrors of a *bellum plus quam civile* ere long broke out, with all its wonted atrocities on both sides.[1]

[1] Ann. Reg. 1798, 155.

31 Great extent and organisation of the conspiracy.

The organisation of the rebels was as complete as their numbers were formidable. Government was aware that a widespread conspiracy pervaded the country, but they were by no means informed as to its arrangements or extent. They had received only some vague information of a seditious confederacy when there were already 200,000 men sworn in throughout the country, in great part armed after a rude fashion, and all animated with the strongest passions which Jacobinical fervour coupled with religious zeal could awake. "An executive council managed their affairs," and was implicitly obeyed from one end of the kingdom to the other. "To that body was intrusted the charge of gaining to their cause men of influence and talent, of preparing the lower classes to pay obedience to their appointed leaders, and of working upon the passions of the multitude by the distribution of seditious publications. As early as 1792, emissaries were sent to different regiments to try to seduce the non-commissioned officers and privates. Itinerant committees travelled through the country, to provide prisoners with pecuniary means for their defence; to endeavour to bribe or intimidate witnesses; to induce under-sheriffs to return disloyal panels; and to terrify any well-disposed juryman who might happen to be sworn." So general were these feelings, that before the schism between the Roman Catholics and Protestants which afterwards took place, many of the Presbyterian clergy in Belfast openly displayed their hostility to England by praying for the success of the French arms.[2]

[2] Cornwallis Corresp. ii. 338.

CHAP. I.

1797.

32. Mission of Lord Edward Fitzgerald and Arthur O'Connor to Paris in 1797.

The designs of the leaders of this insurrection from the first were fixed, and they were, as already mentioned, to effect the entire severance of Ireland from Great Britain, and the establishment of a democratic republic in the former country. But these designs were for long carefully concealed, lest they should deter persons of rank and influence from joining them; and parliamentary reform, liberation from tithes to the Protestant clergy, and the re-establishment of the ancient faith, were held forth as the only objects of the association. Meanwhile, however, the secret and real leaders were in close and active communication with the French Government, with a view to obtain the support of the arms of the great republic in their endeavour to effect their liberation.

May 1797. In the summer of 1797, when the English Government were embarrassed by the monetary crisis and the mutiny in the fleet, two secret agents were despatched to France to concert measures with the French Directory. The persons selected for this important mission were Lord Edward Fitzgerald, son of the first Duke of Leinster, and Arthur O'Connor, son of the member for Philipstown and of Lord Longueville's sister. When persons of such rank and consideration were the leaders in the conspiracy, it need not be said how formidable it had become, and what difficulties the British Government must have had in combating it. They brought with them for the information of the French Government a detailed memoir, drawn up in French, containing a full abstract of the conspiracy, the forces of the insurgents, and the most effectual means by which the severance of Ireland from Great Britain might be effected. They boasted that 150,000 United Irishmen were ready to take up arms in Ulster alone; that 100,000 excellent troops might immediately be formed in Ireland; that the English had only 25,000 regular troops there; that the Irish militia was 20,000 strong, nearly the whole of which would join an invading force if they had once a rallying point;[1] and

[1] Cornwallis Corresp. ii. 339; Castlereagh Corresp. i. 296, 312.

that the great thing would be to accompany the debarkation of the French troops by a proclamation stating that they came to free the Irish, not to enslave them, and that France would make no peace with Great Britain, in which the independence of Ireland, as a separate state, was not expressly guaranteed.*

* "Dans la province d'Ulster il y a 150,000 Irlandois, unis, organisés, et enrolés: une grande partie est enregimentée; un tiers pourroit sortir de la province, et tous y vont avec activité. . . . Si le débarquement se feroit au midi, la marche seroit plus difficile et plus longue, mais on traverseroit cependant un pays ami, et dont le peuple s'empresseroit de se réunir à l'armée Françoise. Killybegs seroit un excellent lieu de debarquement: il n'y a point de troupes dans le voisinage; tous les habitans sont unis, et les comtés Tyrone, Fermanagh, et Monaghan sont au nombre des meilleurs. Le dernier a éprouvé de très longues persecutions. . . . Le pays depuis Sligo jusqu'à Lough Allen et Carrick-on-Shannon est très bien disposé. L'auteur de ce mémoire a pris des arrangements avec ses amis tels qu'on pourrait, dans deux ou trois jours, rassembler jusqu'à 10,000 hommes, et tomber sur Enniskillen, ou tel autre place convenable. . . . Le système d'union est également dans le comté Galway et y fait journellement des progrès. Le comté Roscommon insurgeroit entièrement, ce qui facilitoit les opérations de Galway. Des places designés ci-dessus, celles où nous avons le plus d'armes sont Louth, Armagh, Westmeath, Kildare, le Comté Royal, et la ville de Dublin. Meath est bien organisé, et dans toutes ces places on ne trouve pas moins que 100,000 Irlandois unis et prêts à marcher. . . . Les prêtres Catholiques, qui ont cessé d'être alarmé par les calomnies repandues sur l'irreligion des François, ont adopté les principes du peuple dont ils dependent; ils sont en général bons républicains: ils ont rendu des grandes services en propageant avec un zèle discret le système d'union; et ils ont determiné le peuple à prêter le serment imposé par la force [sans le forcer?] de renoncer en rien à ses principes et à ses projets. En un mot, le pays renferme beaucoup d'hommes propres à former de grandes et de puissantes armées. Il ne manque que les moyens neeessaires pour les mettre sur pied, des armes de toute espèce, des chevaux, de l'argent, et des officiers généraux. . . . La cavalerie qui se trouve dans ce pays monte à environ 6000 hommes, sans compter les volontaires. La moitié de ceux-ci sont Irlandois, et se réuniroient certainement à leurs compatriotes, s'il y avoit quelque apparence de succès. D'après cela, nous penserions qu'il faudroit actuellement plus de 5000 hommes de troupes Françoises si nous ne croyons pas que le nombre doive être porté à 10,000, avec un train considérable de l'artillerie volante. . . . Nous désirons que l'expédition soit commandée par le Général Hoche, et qu'on lui adjoint les officiers Irlandois que le Gouvernement juge à mériter sa confiance par leur fidélité et leurs talents. . . . Il faudroit que le général publia une proclamation au nom du Gouvernement, dans laquelle il déclareroit que les François viennent en qualité d'allié pour délivrer et non pour conquérir l'Irlande. Cette proclamation devoit aussi engager les Irlandois à procéder de suite à l'établissement d'un gouvernement national, et on annoncerait l'intention d'agir comme le fit Rochambeau en Amerique. Cette proclamation produiroit un très grand effet. . . . Ce qui pourroit contribuer efficacement à déjouer les machinations du Gouvernement Anglais, seroit de proposer cette indépendance comme une des conditions de la paix à titre d'échange ou d'indemnité. Une proposition

CHAP. I.

1797.

33. Objects of the conspirators.

The intentions of the conspirators, in regard to the means of effecting this object, were sanguinary in the extreme, and such as would pass for incredible if they were not unhappily paralleled in every age and country by men who peril their cause on the dreadful chances and usages of civil war. The resolution of the conspirators was to put every Orangeman to death; and as they styled every Protestant an Orangeman, this was equivalent to a declaration of extermination against the whole Protestants in the country.* The imagination can scarcely figure the state of exasperation which could lead to the adoption, with deliberate forethought, of such extreme measures; but the terrible examples of the Tyrone rebellion in Ireland in 1641, of the Spanish-American Revolution in 1819, and of the Indian Revolt in 1857, prove that it is not only the usual but the inevitable result of civil war in every age and country; and there exists mournful

aussi authentique ne pourroit être ni cachée ni déguisée : le courage du peuple se reveilloit et la tyrannie qu'on exerce aujourd'hui en Irlande perdroit son empire. Cette proposition ne causeroit pas au reste une très grande surprise puisque dans tous les cercles à Dublin, ministériels ou autres, il en est déjà question. . . . Je n'ai jamais entendu évaluer au-dessus de 25,000 hommes le total des troupes Anglais et Ecossais qui se trouvent dans l'Irlande, sur l'opposition des quelles il faudroit compter. De ce nombre 12 régiments sont arrivés en dernier lieu, et il peuvent être arrivés d'autres. . . . La milice d'Irlande se monte à 18,000 à 20,000 hommes, les plus beaux et les plus disciplinés de l'armée Britannique. On pourroit compter sur eux s'ils avoient un point de ralliement. Les volontaires sont presque tous à cheval et bien montés. Nous sommes certains que la majorité d'entre eux serait pour nous, et qu'il n'y aurait contre nous que quelques corps du Nord, qui sont du parti d'Orange. Le total des volontaires peut se monter à 20,000 hommes. . . . L'artillérie Irlandaise est considerable, mais elle consiste presque entièrement de ceux qui nous sont dévoué. Voilà une esquisse de la situation de nos affaires." — *Mémoire au Gouvernement Français, Avril* 1797 ; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, i. 296-301.

* "In the county of Wexford it is perfectly a religious frenzy. The priests lead the rebels to battle. On their march they kneel down and pray, and show the most desperate resolution in their attack. They put such Protestants as are reported to be Orangemen to death, saving others upon condition of their embracing the Catholic faith. It is a Jacobinical conspiracy throughout the kingdom, pursuing its object chiefly with Popish instruments; the heated bigotry of this sect being better suited to the purpose of the republican leaders than the cold, reasoning disaffection of the northern Presbyterians. The number of the insurgents is great—so great as to make it prudent to assemble a very considerable force before any attempt is made to penetrate that very difficult and enclosed country."—LORD CASTLEREAGH *to* MR WICKHAM, *June* 12, 1798 ; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, i. 219.

evidence that it was the principle both adopted and acted upon by the Irish rebels, and of course, in retaliation, by the Royalists, in 1798.*

34. Small regular forces of the Government.

Had the Government possessed a sufficient military force, it would have been a comparatively easy matter to have combated and put down this conspiracy, how widespread and formidable soever. But, unfortunately, this was very far indeed from being the case; and it was this deficiency which both rendered the insurrection most formidable, and clothed it with its worst horrors. From the correspondence of Lord Cornwallis, now published (who succeeded Earl Camden as Lord-Lieutenant in Ireland), it appears that the regular force at the disposal of Government was inconceivably small. The English Ministry were far from being aware of the magnitude of the danger which awaited them; and though they had been so, they really had not the men to send to the threatened point. They knew that the Directory had 200,000 men ranged along the northern and western coast of France ready for embarkation, under the command of General Buonaparte, the General-in-Chief, with Desaix, the commander of the cavalry, and Generals Baraguay d'Hilliers, Kleber, Kellerman, Randon, Kilmaine, and other renowned chiefs under him.† They did not know where the blow was destined to fall, and it was necessary to

* "Every man that was a Protestant was called an Orangeman, and every one was to be killed, from the poorest man in the country. The women were as bad as the men. The rebels thought it no more sin to kill a Protestant than a dog. Had it not been that they were so soon quashed, they would have fought with each other for the property of the Protestants: they were beginning before the battle of Vinegar Hill. Ever since the rebellion, I never heard one of the rebels express the least sorrow for what was done; on the contrary, I have heard them say, that they were sorry, whilst they had the power, they did not kill more, and that there were not half enough killed."—*Confession of Jas. Beaghan, a Roman Catholic rebel, before execution, 24th August* 1799; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, ii. 422.

† Of the army-list troops ordered for the expedition, 275,000 mounted and dismounted cavalry, infantry, and artillery, all are within twenty-four hours' forced march of the coast. General Buonaparte was the general-in-chief, Desaix second in command, and Baraguay d'Hilliers and Kleber among the generals of division.—*Secret Papers from France, Feb.* 1798; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, i. 166.

CHAP. I. 1798.

be prepared at all points, and especially at those in the south of England likely to be first assailed. The dispersion of the French fleet, which took refuge in Bantry Bay, in November 1796, and the glorious victory of Camperdown in the succeeding year, had alone prevented the descent in some part of the British Isles in those years. In these circumstances it was perfectly impossible for the British Government, even with the aid of the British militia, which all volunteered for service beyond St George's Channel, to have anything like a regular force of the requisite amount in Ireland. Yet, after making every allowance for these difficulties, it is with no small astonishment that we learn now, from authentic sources, that, at the period when the rebellion broke out, and even after that event, *eight skeleton regiments, four weak battalions, and a brigade of the Guards*, constituted the whole British forces stationed in Ireland! On the native Irish force, excepting the mounted yeomanry, it will immediately appear, that no reliance whatever could be placed.[1]* Yet such were the necessities of the British Government, that even with

[1] Cornwallis Corresp. ii. 413.

* "Situated as I am for my sins in the direction of the affairs of a country, nine-tenths of the inhabitants of which are thoroughly disaffected to the Government, with a militia on which no dependence whatever can be placed, and which Abercromby too justly described by saying that they were only formidable to their friends, and with the constant threats of foreign invasion, how hard it is for me to say what troops I can spare. But this is not my only difficulty; as great part of what is supposed to be disposable, is in fact an ideal force. You will see by the enclosed statement that the eight skeleton regiments which are on this establishment are too weak to be of any use here, or to render service elsewhere; and even their wretched numbers are composed chiefly of raw recruits. The brigade of Guards cannot, I conclude, be disposed of for the service of India. There remain, then, the four regiments which were sent in the last spring from Britain: the Royals, consisting, when they landed, of about 300 men; the 2d and 29th, which corps, when they were with me in the late business, brought about 450 each into the field; and the 100th (Huntley's), which produced 600 under arms. . . . I have now put you in possession of all my wealth, and told you all my dangers. . . . You will easily conceive that, with a hostile fleet hovering on our coast, and two civil wars (one in Wexford and Wicklow, and the other in Mayo) raging in the country, I am at this moment pretty well occupied."—MARQUESS CORNWALLIS, *Dublin Castle, Sept.* 25, 1798; *Cornwallis Correspondence*, ii. 413.

the pressing dangers and miserable force at the disposal of the Irish Government, the Ministry in London were anxiously urging the return of some regiments from Ireland to send out to India.*

35. Savage conduct of the Irish militia and volunteers.

This extreme disproportion of the regular British military forces to the necessities of Ireland, threatened at once with foreign invasion and domestic revolt, was attended with an evil of another and a most serious kind, which tended, almost as much as the sanguinary measures of the rebels, to stamp its horrid and melancholy character on the Irish Rebellion, and was made the foundation on which the most atrocious falsehoods and calumnies against Lord Castlereagh were rested. As the British soldiers in this country were a mere handful, and disaffection was so widespread, and in many places universal, it became a matter of absolute necessity to send the Irish militia and yeomanry into the endangered points and disaffected districts. These troops had all the courage which is inherent in the Irish race, but they were in many cases more inclined to take part with the rebels than to act against them, and in almost all were infected with the savage passions and spirit of revenge which is the invariable attendant of civil conflicts, and which always appears with the greatest vehemence where religious fanaticism is mingled with political exasperation. The licentiousness of the Irish troops, both militia and volunteers, soon became, in consequence of the sanguinary excesses of the rebels, and the unbounded exasperation of the Orangemen and Roman Catholics at each other, so extreme, that the locating of these "defenders of order" in the disturbed districts speedily led to a great

* "The eight regiments on this establishment are mere skeletons, yours (the 89th) is by far the strongest; the 30th is the only other corps that has 250 men; several of them have not half that number—the 2d and 29th being about 450 men each under arms, and the 100th (by far the best of the whole) 600. The Royals have on paper only 300. By taking the three serviceable regiments he may ruin Ireland, but I am afraid he cannot save India."—MARQUESS CORNWALLIS *to* MAJOR-GENERAL ROSS, *Sept.* 30, 1798; *Cornwallis Correspondence*, ii. 414.

CHAP. I. 1798.

and most alarming increase of the disturbances, and to cruelties noways inferior to those which disgraced the other side. So generally was this experienced that, when petitions were sent to Government for protection, it was often requested that Irish militia should not be sent.* This state of matters excited the utmost anxiety in the breasts both of Lord Cornwallis and Lord Castlereagh, and they did everything in their power, on every occasion, to terminate them. General, afterwards Sir Ralph, Abercromby condemned these atrocities in the strongest terms, saying they "must render the army formidable to every one but the enemy." But the extremely small amount of the regular force in the island, and the absolute necessity of occupying so many different posts, often very remote and far removed from each other, for long rendered this impossible; and fearful deeds of cruelty were perpetrated, when the disturbances began, with equal impunity on each side. From this cause has arisen the profound and ineradicable hostility of the Irish Ribbonmen and Orangemen at each other which still animates the members of these unhappy factions, and, even in these times, has crossed the ocean with their descendants, and almost periodically, on the 12th July, stains the plains of America with blood.[1]

[1] Castlereagh Corresp. i. 189.

* "This country is daily becoming more disturbed. Religious animosities increase, and I am sorry to say they are encouraged by the foolish violence of all the principal persons who have been in the habit of governing this island; and the Irish militia, from their repeated misbehaviour in the field, and their extreme licentiousness, are fallen into such universal contempt and abhorrence that, when applications are made for the protection of troops, it is often requested that Irish militia may not be sent."—MARQUESS CORNWALLIS *to* MAJOR-GENERAL ROSS, *Sept.* 30, 1798; *Cornwallis Correspondence*, ii. 414.

In the trial of some privates in the ——— Militia for murdering a Catholic, the court-martial found the prisoners guilty, and pronounced sentence of death, accompanied with this recommendation:—"But it appearing that the deceased had belonged to a yeomanry corps which had been disbanded, and that he had not joined any other, the Court are of opinion that at the time the crime was committed the prisoners did not think they were doing an improper act in putting a person *that they thought a rebel* to death; and, from their former good conduct, the Court submit to his Excellency whether they are not fit objects for mercy, and be sent to serve in a regiment abroad for life."—*Cornwallis Correspondence*, ii. 421.

The leaders of the insurrection, Lord Edward Fitzgerald, Mr Arthur O'Connor, and Mr Wolfe Tone, as already mentioned, sent an agent over to Paris, who reached it by way of Hamburg in June 1796, and there concluded a treaty with the French Directory. The conditions of the treaty were, that the French Government should, in the autumn of that year, despatch a considerable expedition to Ireland, in order to assist the people of that country in their endeavours to throw off the yoke of England. The expedition set sail accordingly in December 1796, and appeared in Bantry Bay, but so shattered by a tempest, and in such small numbers, that it was deemed unwise to effect a landing, and it returned in consequence in disgrace to France with the loss of seven vessels. The facility, however, with which the armament reached the coast of Ireland, despite the blockade of the British fleets, revealed the precarious footing on which the Irish connection depended; and had it not been for a storm of unusual severity even on that iron-bound coast, and the want of any proper concert with the Irish malcontents, who were not made acquainted with the intended place of debarkation, the most disastrous results might have followed the descent even of the few thousand men who formed the military force of that expedition.*

36. Treaty between the Irish rebels and the French Government.

Dec. 1796.

* It was resolved by the Irish Executive to accept the tenders of aid made to it by the French Government. "In consequence of this determination of the Executive, an agent was despatched to the Directory, who acquainted them with it, stated the dispositions of the people, and the measures which caused them. He received fresh assurances that the succours should be sent as soon as the armament could be got ready. About October 1796, a messenger from the Republic arrived, who, after authenticating himself, said he came to be informed of the state of the country, and to tell the leaders of the United Irishmen of the intention of the French to invade it speedily, with 15,000 men, and a great quantity of arms and ammunition; but he neither mentioned the precise time nor the place, doubting, we suppose, our caution and secresy. Shortly after his departure, a letter arrived from a quarter which there was reason to look upon as confidential, stating that they would invade England in the ensuing spring, and possibly Ireland. The reason of this contradiction has never been explained; but the consequence of it, and the messenger not having stated the intended place of landing, was that, when the armament arrived in December 1796 at Bantry Bay, they came at a time and in a port we had not foreknown."—*Memoir of the State Prisoners; Castlereagh Correspondence*, i. 366, 367.

CHAP. I.

1797.

37. Renewed attempt of the French in 1797, and battle of Camperdown.

Taught by the disastrous issue of this attempt the many difficulties with which the proposed descent on the Irish coast was beset, the Directory resolved to make the next effort on a larger scale, and with the aid of a powerful fleet, which might be capable of protecting the armament across the Channel. To make the arrangements necessary for this purpose, Lord Edward Fitzgerald, Mr Arthur O'Connor, and Mr Wolfe Tone went over to Paris in June 1797, bearing with them the French memoir as to the state of the country, and the arrangements made for a general rising, from which liberal extracts have already been given.[1] A second and more formal convention was concluded by these more elevated functionaries, by which the aid of a powerful naval as well as military force was promised, but the number was not specified, as the Irish Executive had come to conceive apprehensions of a French armament on the scale which the Directory were desirous to send.* As it was, however, the troops were embarked at the Texel to the

[1] Ante, c. i. § 32, note.

* "A small force only was asked for, because the Executive, faithful to the principle of Irish independence, wished for what they deemed just sufficient to liberate their country, but incompetent to subdue it. Their most determined resolution, and that of the whole body (as far as its opinion could be collected), always has been, in no event to let Ireland come under the dominion of France; but it was offered to pay the expenses of the expedition. The number required was 10,000 men at the most, and at the least 5000. The Executive inclined to the larger number; but, even with the smaller, the general opinion among them was, that there could be no doubt of success. As to the quantity of arms, by the first agent, 40,000 stand were specified; but, by the second, as much more as could be sent. The Executive also instructed its agents to negotiate for a loan of money, if it could be had in France; but, if not, to negotiate for that purpose with Spain: the sum was £500,000." After the negotiations for a general peace at Lille were broken off, our agent "received positive assurances that the Irish never should be abandoned until a separation was effected, and that they should be left entirely at their own option to choose their own form of government. About the same time a person came over, informing us that a considerable armament was ready, and embarked in the Texel, destined for Ireland, and only waiting for a wind. The troops were afterwards disembarked; but we are ignorant of the reason why they never sailed. . . . We know nothing of further communications from any foreign State, nor of the future plan of operations of the French; but we are convinced they will never abandon the purpose of separating this country from England, so long as the discontents of the people would induce them to support an invasion."—*Memoir of O'Connor, Emmett, and M'Nevin, State Prisoners; Castlereagh Correspondence*, i. 368, 370.

number of 15,000, and everything was ready for a descent as soon as the way was cleared across the Channel by the fleet, under De Winter, specially intrusted with that duty. But the British fleet, with Lord Duncan at its head, lay between. The Dutch fleet, under De Winter, came out of the Texel, and the battle of Camperdown took place, which utterly destroyed the hopes of the Republicans in that quarter, and, in the most perilous year of its existence, saved England from the danger of foreign invasion. If we are to give credit to the poetic biographer of Lord Edward Fitzgerald, that nobleman, on his way to Paris to negotiate the treaty with the Directory, dined at a nobleman's in London, in company with Mr Fox, Mr Sheridan, and several leading English Whigs, to whom he deems it probable the designs of the conspirators were divulged. It is to be hoped his combined Irish zeal and poetic fervour has led Mr Moore to estimate unduly the views of these illustrious English statesmen on this occasion.[1]*

Oct. 11, 1797.

[1] Castlereagh Corresp. i. 363-376. Moore's Fitzgerald, i. 165, 166.

At length the battle of Camperdown deprived the United Irish of their best-grounded hopes, yet they were

* "In order to settle all the details of their late agreement with France, and, in fact, to enter into a formal treaty with the Directory, it was thought important by the United Irishmen to send some agent whose station and character should, in the eyes of their new allies, lend weight to his mission, and to Lord Edward Fitzgerald the no less delicate than daring task was assigned. About the latter end of May he passed a day or two in London, and dined at a member of the House of Lords, as I have been informed by a gentleman present, where the company consisted of Mr Fox, Mr Sheridan, and several other distinguished Whigs, all persons who had been known to concur warmly in every step of the popular cause in Ireland, and to whom, if Lord Edward did not give some intimation of the object of his present journey, such an effort of reserve and secrecy was, I must say, very unusual to his character."—MOORE'S *Life of Lord Edward Fitzgerald*, i. 165, 166.

Emmett and the other State prisoners say on this subject:—"After the intended descent [on Ireland] had failed, it occurred to some members of the Opposition and their friends in the City, and to some of the most inconsiderate of the United Irish, that one more attempt should be made in favour of parliamentary reform. . . . No greater connection than that of private acquaintance and friendship ever subsisted beween any of the members of the Opposition and the United Irishmen, except in this instance, and for the accomplishment of this purpose. In consequence of these joint efforts, a meeting was held at the Exchange, which declared in favour of reform."—*Memoir of Emmett, O'Connor, and M'Nevin, State Prisoners; Castlereagh Corresp.* i. 367.

CHAP. I.

1797.

38. First rising of the rebels in 1797.

not discouraged, but resolved to proceed alone. Having in vain endeavoured to urge the Directory to send them assistance, some of the more zealous leaders commenced a rising in the March following; but it was not general, or attended with much danger. General Lake, on 13th March in that year, issued a proclamation, ordering a general search for arms, of which, according to the rebel accounts, there were 100,000 in Ulster alone; but it was not successful, as the quantity found, from the facility of concealing them in bogs and peat-stacks or the like, was by no means great. On May 17, a proclamation, offering a general amnesty, was published to all who should surrender and deliver up their arms within a month; but it too failed in producing any pacification. In effect, the search for arms was productive of the very worst results, and contributed more than any other circumstance to spread hatred at the English rule in the whole island. The regular military force being so small, it was only by the militia and yeomanry that the search could in general be made; and it was just setting one portion of the population, in the highest state of exasperation, to lord it over the other. The living at free quarters, and the domiciliary visits in search of arms, conducted by these zealous but over-excited and disorderly bands, were too often executed with an amount of harshness and cruelty which awakened an uncontrollable thirst for vengeance. Above all, the custom, which soon became too common, of inflicting military flogging in order to compel the disclosure and surrender of arms, excited universally the most indignant feelings, and has more than any other circumstance fixed hatred at the British Government in Ireland. So inherent is this abominable practice in the British military establishment, that it has continued down to times when it might have been expected to have given way to the increasing humanity of the age. It excited the horror of all Europe from its frequent use in suppressing a recent revolt in the Ionian Islands; and when

March 13, 1797.

May 17.

the truth comes to be told in regard to the Indian revolt, it will be found that it was inflicted in India under circumstances, and with a frequency and severity, for which not even the massacres of Cawnpore and Delhi can afford any apology.*

39. Violent designs and proceedings of the rebels.

"In January 1798, Arthur O'Connor, one of the leaders of the insurrection, went to London, in order to carry on a regular correspondence between the United Irish and the "London Corresponding Society," which, like them, was deeply engaged in treasonable designs. The members of this society were in the habit of meeting in an inn, in London, to discuss matters deemed too dangerous to be brought forward at the public meetings. O'Connor, and an Irish priest named O'Coigley, were constant attenders of these meetings; and at them, among other projects, a general rising in the metropolis and throughout the country was contemplated, involving the murder of the King, the royal family, and many members of both Houses of Parliament. Meanwhile the system of predial outrage and violence revived, and attained such a height, that the whole of several counties of Ulster and Leinster were proclaimed as in a disturbed state by the Lord-Lieutenant.[1] So daring did the rebels become, that in open day a body of 200 of them took forcible possession of Cahir, and the search for arms was made from house to house with as much rigour as by the military authori-

[1] Cornwallis Corresp. i. 343.

* "We speak from an intimate knowledge of the dispositions and hearts of our countrymen, when we declare the deepest conviction that the penal laws, which have followed in such rapid and doleful succession, that the house-burnings, arbitrary imprisonments, free quarters, and, above all, the tortures to extort confessions, neither have had, nor can have, any other effect than exciting the most deadly rancour in the hearts of almost all the people of Ireland against those of their countrymen who have had recourse to such measures for maintaining their power, and against the connection with Britain, whose men and whose means have been poured in to aid them. The matchless fidelity which has marked the Union, the unexampled firmness and contempt of death displayed by so many thousands at the halberts, in the field, in the jail, and at the gibbet, exempt us from claiming any belief on our personal credit. If the hearts of the people be not attached by some future measures, this nation will most assuredly be again and more violently disturbed on the next coming of a foreign force."—*Memoir of State Prisoners; Castlereagh Correspondence*, i. 371.

CHAP. I.

ties. At length, on 19th February, the Irish committee passed a formal resolution to pay no attention to any offers from either House of Parliament, and to agree to no terms but a total separation from Great Britain.

1798. Feb. 19.

This resolution, which was an open act of rebellion, brought matters to a crisis, and Government determined to meet it in the most energetic manner. It was some time, however, before they knew where to strike at the leaders; and though they were aware that a formidable conspiracy was on foot in the metropolis, they were ignorant where its head was to be found. At length, having obtained the necessary information from one of their own leaders, the whole Leinster Executive Committee, fourteen in number, with the exception of Lord Edward Fitzgerald, were arrested on the 12th March. His lordship was accidentally absent from the meeting, and thus avoided apprehension at that time. He continued, however, notwithstanding the arrest of his confederates, indefatigable in his efforts to promote what he deemed the good cause; and having established a new executive committee, the plan of a general rising was arranged with the war committee, and fixed for execution on the 23d May. The signal for a general rising was to be the stoppage everywhere of the mail-coach. The authorities made several humane efforts to induce Lord Edward to save himself by withdrawing from the country; but his fidelity to his comrades and devotion to the cause led him to decline them all. The various barracks and posts of Dublin, the camp at Laughlomlow, and the artillery, were to be simultaneously attacked on that day as soon as the signal was given. Government, however, were informed of their designs, as well as of the place of concealment of Lord Edward; and, on the 19th May, four days before the insurrection was to have broken out, preparations were made for arresting him, along with several other leaders, in the house of one Murphy, in Thomas Street, Dublin.[1]

40. Arrest of the Executive Committee. March 12, 1798.

May 19.

[1] Narrative of Lord Edward Fitzgerald's Arrest; Castlereagh Papers, i. 458, 459.

A reward having been offered by Government for the apprehension of Lord Edward, he had taken every precaution to avoid detection. He had narrowly escaped seizure when passing with some of his confederates along Watling Street, when Mr Lake, a very active member of the Union, was taken, and this had made him doubly cautious in the place of his concealment. From the room in which he slept in Murphy's house there was a private staircase to the roof, which adjoined those of some other houses, in which the means of further retreat had been provided. His uniform had been sent there, and he was to have taken the command of the insurrection, fixed for the 23d. A Secretary of State's warrant was addressed to town-majors Sirr and Swan, and Captain Ryan, directing them, with eight soldiers, to proceed to the place of his concealment. On reaching the house, Major Sirr and the soldiers remained at the door to keep off the mob, while Captain Ryan and Major Swan ascended the staircase and entered Lord Edward's room. Major Swan was the first, and on seeing his lordship, who had not time to reach the hidden stair, he said aloud, "You are my prisoner." Lord Edward immediately aimed a blow at him with a double-edged dagger which he held in his hand, and wounded him slightly. Swan thereon called out, "Ryan, Ryan, I am basely murdered." Upon hearing this Ryan ran in, and, seizing Lord Edward, threw him back on the bed; but in doing so received a terrible wound in the bowels from Lord Edward's dagger. Ryan was unarmed, but a man of uncommon resolution; and, notwithstanding the wound he had received, which was extremely severe, he kept his hold of his prisoner during above five minutes that the contest lasted, in the course of which he received fourteen wounds from Lord Edward's dagger. This frightful scene lasted till Major Sirr at length came in, attracted by the noise, with five soldiers;[1] and, seeing Lord Edward still brandishing his double-edged dagger, he fired his pistol at him, and wounded him on

41. Lord E. Fitzgerald's arrest and death. May 19.

1 Ryan's Narrative; Castlereagh Corresp. i. 459-462; Moore's Fitzgerald, ii. 371-373.

CHAP. I. 1798.

the dagger-arm. Though thus wounded, and with his dagger fallen from his hand, he still continued a desperate resistance, and was only overpowered and secured at last by the soldiers crossing their muskets on his breast, and forcing him down.

42. Death of Lord E. Fitzgerald and Captain Ryan. June 4.

Both the principal actors in this terrible tragedy were gallant and determined men; both acted from the highest sense of public and patriotic duty, and both came to an untimely end. Captain Ryan, who was a brave and distinguished officer under Sir Ralph Abercrombie, in the 103d Regiment, was so severely wounded that, notwithstanding the most assiduous attention from Lord Camden, Lord Castlereagh, and the medical officers of the castle, he died on the 30th May. "Every loyal man in the city, not immediately occupied by military duty, attended the body of their beloved fellow-soldier to the grave. The funeral was attended by fifteen hundred gentlemen in uniform, and an infinite number of lamenting friends swelled the mournful procession."[1] * His noble antagonist did not long survive him. After his apprehension, he was carried, in the first instance, to the castle, where he received the kindest attention from Lord Castlereagh and the other members of the Government; but ere long it was judged necessary by the law officers to convey him to prison, where he received every accommodation that circumstances would admit. He was from the first, however, very much depressed in spirits; and when he heard of the death of Captain Ryan, and saw that a charge of murder could not be avoided, he became desperate, tore off, it is said, the bandages from his wounds, and died on June 4. His remains were interred privately in Werburgh Church; but they were attended, in thought, by many millions of

[1] Dublin Journal, June 2, 1798.

* His widow received a pension of £200 a-year from the Irish Government, which was certainly richly deserved, for his character was universally respected, and his seizure of Lord Edward was a mortal stroke to the conspiracy. The base wretch who betrayed the latter for gold received £1000, but his name has never transpired. He was, however, one of the Union, or he could not have been so accurate and correct in his information.—*Castlereagh Correspondence*, i. 462-468.

his admiring countrymen, to whom his memory is still the object of interest approaching to adoration. Yet must the sober judgment of history, while it respects and does justice to his previous character, and appreciates the purity of the motives by which he was actuated in his last enterprise, pronounce a very different verdict on the conduct which led to his untimely death.[1]

[1] Moore's Fitzgerald, ii. 371-378; Castlereagh Papers, i. 462-464.

43. His character.

Lord Edward Fitzgerald, the son of the Duke of Leinster, and the nephew of the Duke of Richmond, was a brave and estimable, but rash and misguided man. He had served with reputation in the 19th Regiment, during the American war, and on many occasions had displayed equal valour and conduct. At Gibraltar, where he had latterly been stationed with his regiment, he was universally esteemed by his acquaintances and beloved by his friends. A bill of attainder was passed against him after his death, notwithstanding the opposing influence of the highest personages, including that of the Sovereign himself; but it was justly thought that when so many other inferior conspirators suffered, justice could not permit the leaders to escape. It was reversed in 1819. His influence was great with the conspirators. "The Irish nation," says his associate M'Nevin, "could not sustain a greater misfortune in the person of any one individual than befell it in the loss of Fitzgerald at that critical moment. With unquestioned intrepidity, republicanism, and devotion to Ireland — with popularity that gave him unbounded influence, and integrity that made him worthy of the highest trust—had he been present in the Irish camp, to organise, discipline, and give to the valour of his country a scientific direction, we should have seen the slaves of the monarchy fly before the republicans of Ireland, as they did before the patriots of America." * Moore, in his *Life of Lord Edward Fitzgerald*, admits that the seizure of that nobleman and the

* M'Nevin was the author of the Memoir to the French Directory, already given, chap. i. § 32, note.

CHAP. I.

1798.

death of Ryan saved Dublin, and ruined the prospects of the conspirators.[1] It is impossible sufficiently to lament the calamitous combination of circumstances which brought two such men, both officers of the British army, who were worthy to have stood side by side on the fields of Talavera or Vitoria, into fierce and mortal strife in their own country. Yet must impartial justice make this distinction between them, that the one died in the courageous discharge of his duty to his sovereign and his country; the other in the prosecution of a frantic project of revolution, from which a war of extermination was undoubtedly to be anticipated in the outset, and certain ruin to the cause of freedom, whichever side proved victorious, in the end.[2]

[1] Moore, i. 132.

[2] Ryan's Narrative; Castlereagh Corresp. i. 462.

44. Breaking out of the rebellion. May 23.

Notwithstanding this loss, which was an irreparable one to the rebellion, it broke out, under the direction of new leaders, with great violence, on the day appointed, being the 23d May. The Government, under the able direction of Lord Camden and Lord Castlereagh, were so well on their guard in the metropolis that the rising was effectually prevented there, and the public tranquillity was hardly disturbed during the whole day. The mail-coaches, however—the preconcerted signal—were stopped in several parts of the country, and instantly the outbreak took place in several counties at the same time. It was particularly violent in the south, in Kildare, Tipperary, Wexford, Wicklow, Carlow, Meath, and King's County; and in Limerick and Antrim in the north. As usual in such cases, the rebels had a very great advantage in the first instance. The insurrection being universal in several districts, and the troops stationed in them extremely scattered, in many cases disaffected, and in all very few in numbers compared to their assailants, it was impossible to prevent several small detachments being cut off. Martial law was at once proclaimed by the Government; and the most vigorous measures were taken to reinforce the royal troops in the disaffected districts; but before the requisite aid could

May 24.

arrive, several calamitous checks had been experienced. A large body of rebels surrounded the village of Prosperous, in Kildare, and massacred the whole soldiers, sixty-nine in number, who defended it. A conflict of doubtful issue ensued between a body of 600 rebels and a detachment of militia, under Sir James Duff, in Wexford, in which both parties claimed the advantage. On the day following, 5000 rebels, under John Murphy, Roman Catholic curate of Bouvalogue, encountered at Oulart, in the same county, 110 of the North Cork Militia, of whom the commanding officer and four privates alone escaped. Wexford was next attacked, and, being abandoned by the Royalists, fell into their hands, with a considerable train of artillery. This last success was of great importance, as putting the rebels in possession of a seaport, by means of which they could communicate with and receive succours from France. They here sullied their victory by the massacre of a hundred prisoners in cold blood. Bishop Troy issued a pastoral letter to his diocese denouncing the rebellion; but, as usual, with efforts made in opposition to the current, it produced no effect.[1]*

1798.

May 24.

May 26.

[1] Cornwallis Corresp. ii. 344-346; Castlereagh Corresp. i. 164, 209.

* "Resolve, we beseech you, to deliver up your arms of every kind, without delay or reluctance, to those appointed to receive them. Unite with all your loyal and peaceable fellow-subjects to put down and crush the wicked spirit of insurrection, so disgraceful to the character of Irishmen. It has already produced the most horrid effects. Assassinations, murders, atrocities of every kind, have been committed. Lose not a moment to manifest your detestation of the principles and causes leading to such consequences."—Bishop Troy *to the Roman Catholic Clergy of the Diocese of Dublin, May* 27, 1798; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, i. 210, 211.

"The rebels still continue in force in the counties of Wicklow, Wexford, Kildare, Carlow, Meath, and King's County. It is difficult to bring them to any decisive action. They commit horrid cruelties, and disperse as soon as the troops appear. Should the insurrection confine itself within the present limits, a short time will dispose of it. There are some unpleasant appearances in certain parts of the north; but as yet all is, in fact, quiet in Ulster, Munster, and Connaught. . . . The spirit of the country rises with its difficulties. Should the rebellion prove only partial, aided by the reinforcements expected from England I look with confidence to the issue, which, if fortunate, cannot fail to place this kingdom, and, of course, the empire, in a state of security much beyond that in which it has stood for years past."—Lord Castlereagh *to* Mr Wickham, *May* 31, 1798; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, i. 212.

CHAP. I.

1798.

45. Reinforcements from England, and successes of the royal forces.

Now thoroughly alarmed, and aware that they had, with the usual apathy of a central government to dangers not immediately threatening themselves, underrated the perils of Ireland, the English Cabinet at length made the most vigorous efforts to meet the crisis. Upon the urgent representations of Lord Castlereagh that the military force at the disposal of the authorities in Ireland was wholly inadequate to meet the pressing demands for assistance which were coming upon them from every part of the kingdom, the English Government sent over considerable reinforcements of regular troops both to the south and north of Ireland.* The successive arrivals of these reinforcements ere long changed the face of affairs, and inclined the balance to the side of Government, though the rebels fought with the utmost resolution, and in some encounters with advantage on their side. The mutual exasperation of the parties, as in all civil conflicts, was hourly on the increase; and before a week was over, quarter was scarcely ever given on either side. Colonel Walpole, with a hundred men, was surprised on his line of march near Tubberneering, and cut off, with his whole party; Gorey and Carlow fell into the hands of the rebels, and affairs wore a very threatening aspect in that vicinity. But these advantages were gained over small bodies of the regular troops only. When they were in greater strength, the usual superiority of disciplined over tumultuary forces appeared. Lord Mountjoy, with the Dublin Militia, repulsed

June 5. a large body of rebels with great slaughter at New Ross, after an obstinate conflict of ten hours' duration, in the course of which that gallant officer was unfortunately

* "In addition to the reinforcement of 3000 infantry and 1000 cavalry already under orders, and in part, I hope, arrived in Ireland, his Majesty's Ministers have this day advised the King to send 5000 more infantry (2000 of the Guards), *without delay*, to such parts of the kingdom as his Excellency, in his despatches of to-day, seems to point out as standing most in need of reinforcements—viz., the Guards to Waterford, embarking at Portsmouth (I hope, on Wednesday or Thursday next), and the remaining 3000 from Scotland to the north of Ireland."—MR WICKHAM *to* LORD CASTLEREAGH, *June* 8, 1798; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, i. 215.

killed. On the following day 250 Protestants, embracing both sexes and all ages, were put to death at Scullabogue to revenge this defeat; and on 9th June a body of nearly 30,000 rebels made a furious attack upon Arklow, held by General Needham with 1600 men; but that officer disposed his men with such skill that, after a contest which lasted the whole day, they were obliged to retire.[1]

[1] Cornwallis Corresp. ii. 346; Ann. Reg. 1798, 166.

46. Battle of Vinegar Hill. June 21.

At length the reinforcements so urgently pressed for by Lord Castlereagh having arrived in the county of Wexford, and the partial successes of the rebels having induced them to collect in a large body and hazard a general battle, an opportunity occurred of crushing them by a decisive blow. The rebel forces, much augmented by some regiments or parts of regiments of militia which had joined them, after some days' marching and countermarching, during which they took up their ground with such skill that General Lake,* who commanded the royal forces, was unable to bring them to action, at length took post on VINEGAR HILL, in a very strong position, and stood firm. They had 14,000 men, most of them well armed, and 13 guns. General Lake had 10,000; but the superiority of the royal troops in quality more than compensated this disadvantage in numbers. Lake attacked the position in front with his infantry, while his light troops and cavalry, when the action was fairly engaged, assailed its flanks. The rebels stood their ground at first with great resolution, and the result of the contest seemed for a brief period doubtful; but when the horsemen were seen ascending the heights on their flanks, they were seized with a sudden panic, broke and fled.[1] The royal troops, regulars, and militia, behaved extremely well in the action; but they were so exasperated by the cruelties which the rebels had exercised upon such of their number as had fallen into their hands, that

[1] Cornwallis Corresp. ii. 347; Castlereagh Cor. i. 222, 223; Lake's Desp.; Ann. Reg. 1798, 165, 166.

* Afterwards Lord Lake, the hero of Delhi and Laswaree, and so renowned in India.

CHAP. I. 1798.

they gave no quarter in the pursuit, and the number of slain was painfully great. The victory was complete, the rebel army entirely dispersed, and their whole artillery and ammunition captured, with the loss only of one officer killed and four wounded. On the same day Wexford was taken by General, afterwards so renowned as Sir John Moore.*

46. Lord Castlereagh's humane injunctions to General Lake in regard to the rebels.

This victory was a mortal stroke to the rebellion, and, in its ultimate results, one of the most fortunate events which ever occurred to Ireland, by closing the door to insurrection and opening that to union and conciliation. But, in the first instance, it increased to a most painful degree the embarrassment of Government, from the number of prisoners taken on the field or shortly after, and the extreme difficulty of coercing the passions of the militia and yeomanry, to whose courage and conduct the success had in a great degree been owing. Lord Castlereagh's injunctions to General Lake in the first moments of victory had been to strike decidedly against the leaders, but spare the misguided followers—a policy which, to the end of the world, will be found to be the only effectual, as it is the only just, way of dealing with revolutions.† But it was more easy to issue these humane and wise directions from the Castle of Dublin

* "The troops behaved excessively well in action; but their determination to destroy every one they think a rebel is beyond description, and wants much correction."—GENERAL LAKE *to* LORD CASTLEREAGH, *June* 21, 1798.

† I sincerely congratulate you upon your successes at Vinegar Hill. I consider the rebels as now in your power; and I feel assured that your treatment of them will be such as shall make them sensible of their crimes, as well as of the authority of Government. It would be unwise, and contrary, I know, to your own feelings, to drive the wretched people, who are mere instruments in the hands of the more wicked, to despair. The leaders are just objects of punishment; and the situation of the rebel army such, that you may fairly make the terms you give them rather an act of voluntary clemency than conditions extorted by the rebels with any prospect on their part of successful resistance."—LORD CASTLEREAGH *to* GENERAL LAKE, *June* 22, 1798; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, i. 223, 224.

General Lake wrote in reply:—"I believe the lower order of people are heartily sick of the business, and are abusing their leaders most completely, and will bring in their arms in a day or two; in short, I have every reason to hope that a few days will settle the business here. I have taken Hay, one of their

than to carry them into execution in the insurgent counties, where the broken remains of the rebels were pursued by the Irish militia and yeomanry, excited even to madness by the savage cruelties of the insurgents when they had the power, and resolved now to wreak their vengeance in the most indiscriminate manner on all those connected with the insurgent cause. Lord Camden as well as Lord Castlereagh did their utmost to restrain this relentless and barbarous conduct on the part of the Irish troops employed, but for long with very little effect; and it was not till the arrival of additional regiments of English regulars and of British militia or fencibles, which had volunteered their services in Ireland, had enabled the Government at length to supersede in a great degree the employment of native Irish troops in this cruel civil war, that the disorders were in any material degree repressed, and the authority of law, over victors as well as vanquished, restored in that distracted island.[1]*

[1] Cornwallis Corresp. ii. 352, 353; Castlereagh Corresp. i. 226.

commanders, yesterday. He will be tried this evening, and most probably executed. If I hear of any assembly of men, you may depend upon their having a complete drubbing; but I strongly suspect they will not try the chance of another. The carnage yesterday was dreadful. The rascals made a tolerable good fight of it. . . . I have every reason to think matters will be settled shortly to the satisfaction of Government. I believe we shall have most of their generals. Roach has been tried this day, and will be executed, as will Keugh, who was both general, adviser, governor of the town, &c. I really feel most severely the being obliged to order so many men out of the world; but I am convinced, if severe and many examples are not made, the rebellion cannot be put a stop to."—GENERAL LAKE *to* LORD CASTLEREAGH, *Wexford, June 22 and 23, 1798; Castlereagh Correspondence*, i. 224, 225.

* "His Excellency the Lord-Lieutenant highly approves of your issuing the most positive orders against the infliction of punishment, under any pretence whatever, not authorised by the orders of a general officer, in pursuance of the sentence of a general court-martial."—LORD CASTLEREAGH to LIEUTENANT-GENERAL SIR JAMES STEWART, BART., *June 25, 1798; Cornwallis Correspondence*, ii. 353.

"It shall be one of my first objects to soften the ferocity of our troops, which, I am afraid, in the Irish corps at least, is not confined to the private soldiers. I shall immediately authorise the general officers in the different districts which have been the seat of warfare to offer (with certain exceptions) to the deluded wretches who are still wandering about in considerable bodies, and are committing still greater cruelties than they themselves suffer, the permission of returning quietly to their homes, on their delivering up their arms, and taking the oath of allegiance; and I shall use my utmost exertions to suppress the folly which has been too prevalent in this quarter, of substituting

CHAP. I. 1798.

48. Earl Camden is succeeded by Lord Cornwallis. June 20.

Henceforward the insurrection, once so general and formidable, was reduced to scattered bands of desperadoes wandering over the country or seeking refuge in its woods or morasses. As this was the greatest triumph of Earl Camden's administration, so it was the last. On the very day before the battle of Vinegar Hill was fought, and, of course, not in time to take any part in the arrangements which led to it, Marquess Cornwallis arrived in Dublin, and immediately assumed the direction of affairs as Lord-Lieutenant. The reasons of this change are obvious. Though Government in England had the highest opinion of Lord Camden's principles and talents, yet it was universally felt that in the crisis which had arisen it had become indispensable to concentrate the civil and military authority in the same hands—on the principle which led the Romans in similar circumstances to appoint a dictator. This was in an especial manner the case in Ireland at this time, when the war had degenerated into a Vendean contest with small parties of rebels, especially in Wicklow, the northern parts of Wexford, Kildare, and the borders of Meath and Dublin counties; and the royal troops, especially the militia and yeomanry, were in such a state of exasperation that it was at once the first duty and most difficult task of Government to get them restrained. Add to this that the English Government were extremely desirous to extract the religious element out of this terrible warfare, and bring it back to its original and real character of a Jacobin revolt;[1] and it was thought that this new character could more easily be given to the contest by a new Lord-Lieutenant than by

[1] Castlereagh Corresp. i. 226.

the word *Catholicism* instead of Jacobinism, as the foundation of the present rebellion."—MARQUESS CORNWALLIS *to the* DUKE OF PORTLAND, *Home Secretary, June* 28, 1798; *Cornwallis Correspondence*, ii. 355.

"The villains spring up like mushrooms; but I am in hopes they must be completely tired out shortly. We shall get in the arms in this country shortly. . . . The horrid cruelties the rascals have committed are beyond all imagination."—GENERAL LAKE *to* LORD CASTLEREAGH, *Wexford, June* 25, 1798; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, i. 226.

one who was pledged, especially by what had occurred at the outset of his administration, to resist further concessions to the Roman Catholics.

Lord Castlereagh, in pursuance of the earnest recommendation of the British Government, was continued by the new Lord-Lieutenant in the office of Lord Keeper, and discharged, as before, until his appointment as secretary, the whole duties of the latter office. Of the difficulties with which he had to contend, and the great capacity with which they had been met by him, a strong picture is presented in a private and confidential letter by Marquess Cornwallis to the Duke of Portland, which has recently been published in his *Correspondence*:—"I am anxious to put you in possession of the best opinions which I have yet been able to form for extricating this country from the immediate danger with which it is threatened. No actual force at this moment exists in arms against us, except in the county of Wicklow and the northern boundary of Wexford, and in the county of Kildare, and borders of the counties of Meath and Dublin. In the former the rebels act sometimes in small parties, but often in a considerable body, amounting, I believe (after due allowance for exaggeration), to at least 5000 men, the greater part of whom are armed only with pikes. The difficulty of coming up with an army of this kind, without artillery and baggage, in that wild and mountainous country, has hitherto prevented our striking any serious blow; and the ignorance of our officers who have commanded small detachments, has afforded the rebels some encouraging advantages. I am, however, at present arranging a plan of attacking them, which I hope will succeed so far as to disperse them, and to intimidate them so much as to prevent their assembling again in great numbers, which will to a certain degree have its effect in encouraging our friends and disheartening our enemies throughout the whole country; but I am not so sanguine as to hope to reduce the county of Wicklow to

49. Lord Cornwallis's picture of the state of Ireland at this period. July 8, 1798.

CHAP. I. 1798.

a peaceable state in a short time by force of arms. The warfare in Kildare and the adjoining border of Meath is conducted, on the part of the enemy, entirely by small parties, which attack escorts and detachments, burn houses, murder those who will not join them, and retire to the bogs. The rest of Ireland may, I am afraid, be rather said to be in a state of *present* inactivity, than of any friendly or even peaceable intentions towards us. The Irish militia are totally without discipline—contemptible before the enemy when any serious resistance is made to them, but ferocious and cruel in the extreme when any poor wretches, either with or without arms, come within their power: in short, murder appears to be their favourite pastime. Under these circumstances, I conceive it to be of the utmost advantage that we should put an end to hostilities, provided that measure can be effected by the submission, delivery of arms, and apparent penitence of the rebels, who have been defeated in every action of consequence, who have lost many leaders by the hands of the executioner, and who, from all accounts, are in general heartily tired of the business in which they are engaged.

50. Continued.

"The proclamation circulated by the generals commanding in those districts which either are or have been in a state of insurrection, has, by the reports which I have received, been attended with very considerable effect; but it has been represented to me that the greater number dare not desert their leaders, who have it in their power to destroy them if they should return to their houses, and these leaders are rendered desperate, by not having a hope held out to them that even their lives would be spared. . . . In the proclamation of general pardon throughout the country, which I have now asked leave from his Majesty to issue (with the approbation and concurrence of the Lord Chancellor), I propose to exclude from security of life only those who have been guilty of cool and deliberate murder, and

to leave the leaders liable to banishment for such term as the safety of the State may require, to be extended in some instances to banishment for life; and it is proposed, after the report of a secret committee shall have been received, to require the surrender of three or four of the most dangerous persons, who are now supposed to be out of the country, within a reasonable limited time, under pain of an act of attainder. . . .

"The principal persons of this country, and the members of both Houses of Parliament, are, in general, averse to all acts of clemency; and, although they do not express, and perhaps are too much heated to see, the ultimate effects which their violence must produce, would pursue measures that could only terminate in the extirpation of the greater number of the inhabitants, and in the utter destruction of the country. The words Papists and Priests are for ever in their mouths, and by their unaccountable policy they would drive four-fifths of the community into irreconcilable rebellion; and in their warmth they lose sight of the real cause of the present mischief—of that deep-laid conspiracy to revolutionise Ireland on the principles of France, which was originally formed, and by wonderful assiduity brought nearly to maturity, by men who had no thought of religion but to destroy it, and who knew how to turn the passions and prejudices of the different sects to the advancement of their horrible plot for the introduction of that most dreadful of all evils, a Jacobin revolution. . . . I should be very ungrateful if I did not acknowledge the obligations which I owe to Lord Castlereagh, whose abilities, temper, and judgment, have been of the greatest use to me, and who has, on every occasion, shown his sincere and unprejudiced attachment to the general interests of the British empire."[1]

51. Concluded.

[1] Marquess Cornwallis to Duke of Portland, July 8, 1798; Cornwallis Corresp. ii. 356-359.

Such was the policy which, in the moment of victory over a formidable and bloodthirsty rebellion, Marquess Cornwallis and Lord Castlereagh concocted for its final

CHAP. I.

1798.

52. Amnesty proposed by Lord Cornwallis and Lord Castlereagh.

extirpation, and the alleviation of its horrors. It may safely be said that their conduct on this occasion, and indeed throughout the whole of this fearful contest with the rebels, was a model of firmness and clemency, such as can alone extirpate from a state, when once introduced, the terrible evils of civil war. The mingled wisdom and humanity of this becomes the more striking from the melancholy contrast which it presents to the fearful severities at first exercised during the Indian revolt fifty years after. It was the earnest wish of both Lord Cornwallis and Lord Castlereagh "that the measure [the amnesty proposed] should have," in the words of the latter, "all the grace possible, and pushed as far as compatible with the public safety." There was an amnesty accordingly agreed to by the Government, but it was not of the liberal kind recommended by them, and prepared with the concurrence of the Irish Chancellor. On the contrary, the exceptions from it, as it was finally sanctioned by the English Cabinet and published by the Lord-Lieutenant, were so numerous as in a great measure to take away from the grace of this act of mercy. As it was, however, it did great good; and the more so that, as Lord Castlereagh had earnestly entreated, it was issued "*pending the rebellion*"—not, as in other cases, after its termination. The views of both Lord Cornwallis and Lord Castlereagh on this subject are well stated in a letter by the latter to the English Government, on July 30, which is given below.[1] *

[1] Castlereagh Corresp. i. 243; Cornwallis Corresp. ii. 359, 360.

* "I am very happy to find that the determination of the Lord-Lieutenant as to the Bill of Pardon has been such as will relieve the Duke of Portland from all anxiety on this subject. . . . It is the wish of the Lord-Lieutenant that the measure should have all the grace possible, and that the principle of pardon should be pushed as far as may be at all compatible with the public safety. At the same time, his Excellency feels it necessary to advert to the peculiarity of this act of grace being granted *pending the rebellion*. In every other instance, the Bill of Pardon has followed the struggle, and the principal object in view has been the quieting of the minds of those who had been engaged in the treason. In the present case, the rebellion, though crushed in a military sense, is yet in organised force; and, in many parts of the kingdom, disturbances still exist, and the people retain their arms with an obstinacy that

Such as it was, the amnesty, following as it did upon the battle of Vinegar Hill, and the repeated defeats of the rebels in the field, had the best effect. Numerous individual pardons were granted, which took persons implicated out of the too wide excepted classes, and nearly restored the act of grace to the proportions which had been originally proposed by the Lord-Lieutenant and Lord Castlereagh. "Although," said Lord Cornwallis, on July 9, "there is no enemy here to oppose a large body of our troops in the field, we are still engaged in a war of plunder and massacre; but I am in great hopes that, partly by force and partly by conciliation, we shall bring it to a speedy termination."[1] The chief difficulty which the Lord-Lieutenant experienced in this work of pacification arose from the violence and passions of the high Tory party about the Castle of Dublin, who had hitherto ruled Ireland. "The numbers of the rebels in each quarter," said he, on July 13, "are, from the best accounts that I receive, very small: they have very few arms, and, except as a band of cruel robbers, house-burners, and murderers, are very contemptible. Their importance, however, is purposely exaggerated by those who wish to urge Government to the continuance of violent measures, or, according to a fashionable phrase of some men of great consequence here, *to keep Government up to their*

53. Violence and passions of the extreme Protestant party in Dublin.

[1] Cornwallis Corresp. ii. 360.

indicates the cause is not yet abandoned. Under this impression, his Excellency is of opinion that the pardon must be granted upon a principle of precaution as well as of clemency; and that, although it might be highly dangerous, by the terror of severe punishment, to drive numerous classes of men, however deeply implicated in the treason, to despair, yet that it is still necessary for the safety of the State to keep the leaders under the restraint of the law, holding out to them such a principle of compromise as shall not drive them to take up arms as the only means of preserving their lives, but shall leave Government at liberty to look to its own safety."—LORD CASTLEREAGH *to* MR WICKHAM, *July* 30, 1798; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, i. 243, 244. The exceptions from the amnesty were persons in custody before its publication; those guilty of murder or conspiracy to murder; yeomanry who have deserted, or administered illegal oaths; persons having had direct communication with the enemy; the county delegates; and the captains of forces actually in the field. The greater part of these exceptions were forced upon Lord Cornwallis by the English Government in London.

CHAP. I. 1798.

traces. I apprehend that I am suspected of not being disposed to set my neck stoutly to the collar. . . . I have been under the necessity of acting from a conviction that, as far as it concerns the great mass of the deluded people, amnesty is more likely to succeed than extirpation; and, even in respect to the leaders of small note, to suggest that banishment for seven or ten years would answer all the purposes to the State of banishment for life or hanging, which latter is the most favourite kind of punishment." "I have every reason to be highly satisfied with Lord Castlereagh, who is really a very uncommon young man, and possesses talents, temper, and judgment suited to the highest stations, without prejudices, or any views that are not directed to the general benefit of the British empire."[1]

[1] Marquess Cornwallis to General Ross, July 9 and 13, 1798; Cornwallis Corresp. ii. 361, 362.

54. Efforts of Lords Cornwallis and Castlereagh on the side of mercy.

The firm and resolute policy pursued by Lord Cornwallis and Lord Castlereagh at length produced the desired effect. The bands which still infested the country gradually fell off; the principal leaders surrendered on condition of their lives being spared; and at length, in the beginning of August, tranquillity was restored in every quarter. Lord Cornwallis firmly resisted every proposal to negotiate with any body of rebels having arms in their hands;* and this determined conduct, coupled with the amnesty, produced a general submission. There remained the difficult and melancholy task of disposing of the prisoners who had been taken in open rebellion, and to whom no hopes of lenity had been held out. Their number was very considerable; and the Government had no small

* "Lord Cornwallis has always declined entering into any formal treaty with rebels in arms; and he cannot but express his great disapprobation of your having accredited by your signature a proposal, highly exceptional and assuming in its terms, coming from leaders to whom the proclamation sent to you for publication did not apply. . . . It is his Excellency's command that you do return to them forthwith the proposal in question, and put an end to the armistice immediately; but, as there may have arisen some delay in the merciful intentions of his Excellency being made known, he is willing to extend the time for receiving their submission for twenty-four hours from the communication of your reply."—LORD CASTLEREAGH *to* GENERAL WILFORD, *July* 18, 1798; *Cornwallis Correspondence*, ii. 367.

difficulty in making the selection of who should be spared, and who left for execution. As usual, the extreme Protestant party urged upon the Lord-Lieutenant the most rigorous measures; and it required all his firmness, supported by Lord Castlereagh, to resist their importunities. He did so, however, and the number of persons executed was, by the humane endeavours of these two, very much diminished; and valuable disclosures were made in return, though, on some occasions, they stood alone of all the persons in the Government on the side of mercy.*

55. Landing of the French in Killala Bay. Aug. 22.

Before the State trials at Dublin were ended, however, an event occurred in the west of Ireland, which demonstrated that the apprehensions of the extreme Tory party in Dublin were not so unfounded as Lords Cornwallis and Castlereagh seemed to suppose. On the 22d August a small body of French, not more than eleven hundred in number, effected a landing in Killala Bay, in the west of Ireland; and although their number was so inconsiderable that no danger was to be apprehended from them if the

* "A proposition of an extraordinary nature was brought to me on the night of the 24th from a number of the State prisoners, and the greater part of the men of consequence amongst them, offering to make acknowledgment of their offences, and to submit to banishment for life to any country in amity with his Majesty, provided that Byrne and Oliver Bond, who were then under sentence of death, and Neilson, who is not yet tried, but who is likely to be condemned, might be included in the offer, and be allowed to share the same fate with them. I confess that I thought this a question of the greatest importance, and one that deserved the most mature consideration, and Lord Castlereagh was of the same opinion; but we doubted whether it would be possible to find a third man in this place that would agree with us; and I was sensible of the danger of taking a step, without some legal or political support, that would irritate almost to madness the well-affected part of this kingdom. There was but little time for deliberation, as Byrne was to be hanged on the 25th, and Oliver Bond this day. The Chancellor, who, notwithstanding all that is said of him, is by far the most moderate and right-headed man amongst us, was absent. I sent therefore, yesterday morning, as professional men, for Lords Carleton and Kilwarden, the Attorney and Solicitor-General, and the Prime Serjeant, when Lord Castlereagh submitted to them the paper, with the signatures above mentioned." They gave their opinion in the most decided manner against the measure; and as "I could not act in opposition to them, though not convinced by their arguments, the transaction, to my concern, is now at an end." Bond was respited, however, in spite of the most vehement resistance, and the confession received.—LORD CORNWALLIS *to* DUKE OF PORTLAND, *July* 26, 1798; *Cornwallis Correspondence*, ii. 370-378.

CHAP. I. 1798.

troops remained steady, yet it soon appeared that they were not all by any means to be depended on, and that a very trifling success on the part of the invaders would soon involve the whole country again in the horrors of rebellion. The expedition was under the command of General Humbert; and as their descent upon the coast was wholly unexpected, they effected their landing without opposition or difficulty. They immediately organised a provisional government, and set about raising troops. They published two proclamations—one from the French General, and another from Napper Tandy, an Irish leader—both well calculated to excite and encourage the peasantry.* From the first moment of their appearance the excitement was extreme amongst the country people, who flocked to them from all quarters; and, what was much more alarming, the strongest symptoms of disaffection appeared in some of the regiments, especially of militia and yeomanry, sent to oppose them.[1]†

[1] Cornwallis Corresp. ii. 391-394; Castlereagh Corresp. i. 323.

* General Humbert's proclamation bore:—"United Irish! The soldiers of the Great Nation have landed on your shores, amply provided with arms, ammunition, and artillery, to aid you in breaking your fetters and recovering your liberties. Napper Tandy is at their head: he has sworn to break your chains or to perish in the attempt. To arms, freemen!—to arms! the trumpet calls you; do not let your brethren perish unrevenged. If it is their destiny to fall, may their blood cement the glorious fabric of freedom." Napper Tandy's proclamation set forth:—"What do I hear? The British Government talks of concessions; will you accept them? Can you for a moment entertain the thought of entering into terms with a government which leaves you at the mercy of the English soldiery, which massacres inhumanly your best citizens—with a Ministry which is the pest of society and the scourge of the human race. They hold in one hand the olive branch: look well to the other; you will see in it the hidden dagger. No, Irishmen! you will not be the dupe of such base intrigues. Feeling its inability to subdue your courage, it seeks only to seduce you; but you will frustrate all her efforts. Barbarous crimes have been committed on your country; your friends have fallen victims of their devotion to your cause; their shades surround you; they call aloud for vengeance. Irishmen! declare a war of extermination against your oppressors—the eternal war of liberty against tyranny."—NAPPER TANDY, *see Hardenberg's Memoirs*, vi. 223-225.

† "I think it absolutely necessary to state, for your lordship's information, that it is impossible to manage the militia; their whole conduct has been this day of action most shameful, and I am sorry to say that there is a strong appearance of disaffection, particularly in the Kilkenny, as Lord Ormonde has reported to me. His lordship's conduct has constantly been most meritorious, but his men are not obedient to his orders. The Louth regiment are

No sooner did Government receive intelligence of this unexpected invasion, than they made every possible exertion to crush it. Troops were directed as quickly as possible to the menaced district; but, unfortunately, they consisted chiefly of Irish militia and volunteers, whose fidelity, doubtful before, became absolute treachery on the field of battle. General Hely Hutchinson,* who commanded in the district, by great exertions got together nearly 4000 men and eleven guns, with 1700 of which he took post at Castlebar, near Killala, on the evening of the 26th August. The remainder were detached in two columns, under Sir Thomas Chapman and General Taylor, to cut off the enemy's retreat to Killala and Ballina, where they had landed. At midnight General Lake arrived, and took the command of the army; and at daybreak intelligence was received that the French were advancing. They had only two 4-pounders, and from thirty to forty mounted men, besides the infantry. The result must be given in General Hutchinson's words: "Nothing could exceed the misconduct of the troops, with the exceptions of the artillery, which was admirably served, and of Lord Roden's Fencibles, who appeared at all times willing to do their duty. There is too much reason to imagine that two of the regiments had been previously tampered with, the hope of which disaffection induced the French to make the attack, which was certainly one of the most hazardous and desperate ever thought of, against a very superior body of troops, as their retreat both on Killala and Ballina was cut off by Sir Thomas Chapman and General Taylor. When the troops fell into confusion without the possibility of rallying them, there was scarcely any danger. Very few men at that time had fallen on our part; the French, on the contrary, had suffered considerably. They lost six offi-

56. Defeat of the British at Castlebar. Aug. 27.

well disposed and in good order."—GENERAL LAKE *to* LORD CORNWALLIS, *August* 28, 1798; *Cornwallis Correspondence*, ii. 391.

* Brother to Lord Donoughmore, and commander of the British army in Egypt after Sir Ralph Abercromby's death.

CHAP. I. 1798.

cers and from 70 to 80 men, which was great, considering how short a time the action lasted, and the smallness of their numbers. . . . The French were about 700, having left 100 at Ballina, and 100 at Killala. They had with them about 500 rebels, a great proportion of whom fled after the first discharge of cannon. . . . I am convinced, had our troops continued firm for ten minutes longer, the affair must have been over to our entire advantage; but they fired volleys, without any orders, at a few men before they were within musket-shot. It was impossible to stop them, and they abandoned their ground immediately afterwards."[1]*

[1] General Hutchinson to Marquess Cornwallis, Sept. 21, 1798; Cornwallis Corresp. ii. 409, 410.

57. Surrender of the invaders to Lord Cornwallis. Sept. 8.

Whatever faults the Irish may have, want of courage, beyond all doubt, is not among the number, and therefore there could be no doubt that this flagrant misconduct was owing to disaffection and a secret concert with the enemy. As such it came like a thunderbolt upon the Government, and revealed the depth of the abyss, on the edge of which they stood. Lord Cornwallis made the most vigor-

* The account of another witness is still more graphic:—"General Hutchinson was with about 1500 men at Castlebar, and he had settled the ground on which he meant to resist an attack. Between six and seven [in the morning] the French appeared. They came on in three columns of near 800 each, as they had armed many of the country people, and with two curricle guns. They advanced with rapidity, firing their cannon obliquely on all parts of our line. Their fire was returned with much effect by our artillery, which did execution. The French continued advancing, and began a rapid charge with the bayonet in very loose order. At this moment the Galway Volunteers, the Kilkenny and Longford Militia, ran away. Lord Ormonde exerted himself to stop his men. He first begged and beseeched—he then upbraided and swore at them. He ran two of them through the body, and burst into tears. Lord Granard in vain exerted himself with the Longford; they behaved as ill. The 6th Regiment, of 120 men, and the Frasers, behaved well; and had the rest done the same, the day had been completely ours. One of the French columns made for our flank, which, I suppose, first disconcerted the militia. I hear that a person who was prisoner with the French reports that, had our troops sustained the attack for a minute longer, the French would have turned about. A detachment of Lord Roden's behaved gallantly. I fear there was disaffection in the two militia regiments; they are Catholics, and were many, if not most of them, sworn United Irishmen. They are both fine regiments in appearance—fine men, and well drilled—capable in point of body, youth, and agility, and *habilité*, to face any troops. I am confident treachery will come out."—EDWARD COOKE, ESQ., *to* WM. WICKHAM, ESQ., *August* 31, 1798; *Cornwallis Correspondence*, ii. 392, 393.

ous efforts to arrest the danger. He hurried in person to the spot, taking with him every disposable man of the regulars and English militia which he could collect. Such was the zeal with which these troops hastened to the front, that some of them, in particular the carbineers, marched eighty miles in twenty-seven hours! By this means Lord Cornwallis was enabled to collect such a force around the invaders, that, seeing the contest hopeless, and their retreat cut off, they surrendered at discretion. This was a most important advantage in itself, but it became still more so from its consequences. The rebels lost now their last hope, that of succour from France. They became, in consequence, desperate. The leaders were all either in custody or had fled the country:* and their followers, dispersed and dejected, returned to their homes, in their external conduct in general peaceable and submissive. Their deadly feeling of hostility to the Saxon, however, nourished in secret, was noways abated. It led some years after to a fresh attempt at insurrection; and it has induced that inextinguishable passion for predial outrage and murder which has so long been the disgrace of Ireland, and gone so far to render unavailing all the prodigal gifts of nature to that beautiful but unhappy land.[1]

CHAP. I. 1798. Sept. 8.

[1] Cornwallis Corresp. ii. 395; Castlereagh Corresp. i. 323, 339.

58. Good effects of this abortive invasion.

Another good effect resulted from this abortive attempt at invasion, which, though not so obvious at the beginning, was not less important in the end. The forces which arrived from England soon after the landing at Killala and

* Napper Tandy was far from realising his promise to conquer or die. "During the action with the Tom, he squatted on the deck, with a pint bottle of brandy, which he emptied twice. The French officers on board, all except General Ray, agreed in accusing Tandy of cowardice, imbecility, and wickedness, and wrote a letter of impeachment against him to the Minister of Marine. The names they gave him were *infâme, imbécile, scélérat.* To show how the finances of France are, and how they meant to make their Irish friends pay their expenses, their generals went out on that little expedition, and all the money they could muster among them was about twenty or thirty louis-d'ors. One of them, to my own certain knowledge, had but five guineas in all." Napper Tandy escaped into Belgium, from whence he reached Hamburg.—MR WICKHAM *to* LORD CASTLEREAGH, *October* 25, 1798; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, i. 407, 408.

CHAP. X

1798.

the disaster at Castlebar were known in London, were so considerable as to enable the Government almost entirely to dispense with the services of the Irish militia in quarters where any danger was threatened; and this alone delivered the inhabitants from a most unruly and licentious body of men, and spread universally the conviction that the country could be preserved from insurrection, and the empire from dismemberment, only by the aid of powerful forces from England. The delusion of Ireland being able to defend itself was at once dispelled. The conduct of the militia, both in action at Castlebar and during the flight from that place, had been so bad that it was evident no reliance whatever could be placed on them.*

* "The conduct of the Longford and Kilkenny, and that of the carbineers and Frasers in action, on the retreat from Castlebar and Tuam, and the depredations they committed on the road, exceed, I am told, all description. Indeed they have, I believe, raised a spirit of discontent and disaffection which did not before exist in this part of the country. Every endeavour has been used to prevent plunder in our corps, but it really is impossible to stop it in some of the regiments of militia with us, particularly the light battalions."—CAPTAIN TAYLOR *to* LORD CASTLEREAGH, *August* 31, 1798; *Cornwallis Correspondence*, ii. 394.

"I have little doubt of the Killala expedition proving a second edition of the [landing in] Fishguard Bay [Pembrokeshire]; but I dread the indiscipline of the Irish militia: friends or foes are all the same to them, and they will plunder indiscriminately, advancing or retreating; and, from what I have heard, no effort is made to restrain them. The dread the inhabitants have of the presence of a regiment of militia is not to be told: they shut up their shops, hide whatever they have, and, in short, all confidence is lost wherever they make their appearance."— —— *to* LORD CASTLEREAGH, *August* 29, 1798; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, i. 342.

Lord Cornwallis issued at this period the following energetic proclamation to the troops:—"It is with very great concern that Lord Cornwallis finds himself obliged to call on the general officers and the commanding officers of regiments in particular, and in general on the officers of the army, to assist him in putting a stop to the licentious conduct of the troops, and in saving the wretched inhabitants from being robbed and in the most shocking manner ill-treated by those to whom they had a right to look for safety and protection. Lord Cornwallis declares that, if he finds that the soldiers of any regiment have had opportunities of committing these excesses from the negligence of their officers, he will make those officers answerable for their conduct; and that, if any soldiers are caught either in the act of robbery or with the articles of plunder in their possession, they shall be instantly tried, and immediate execution shall follow their conviction. A provost-marshal will be appointed, who will, with his guard, march in the rear of the army, and who will patrol about the villages and houses in the neighbourhood of the camp."—*General Orders, Ballinamore, August* 31, 1798; *Cornwallis Correspondence*, ii. 395.

From necessity, therefore, the system was adopted of moving these militia and fencible regiments from Ireland into Great Britain, and supplying their place by English and Scotch regiments, which volunteered from the sister island. Infinite good resulted from this exchange. The Irish regiments, detached from the passions and disorders of home, rapidly improved in conduct and discipline, and became worthy to wear the British uniform: thence arose the saying, which for half a century has been current in the army, that the only way to make the Irish good soldiers is to send them out of their own country. The British regiments of regulars and militia, which were sent over in great numbers in exchange, exhibited a striking contrast to the license and disorders of the Irish ones which had departed, and lessened the aversion at the British connection by showing that the inhabitants of England were not all the monsters in human form which had been represented. They won regard and esteem wherever they went, by the strictness of their discipline and the gentleness of their manners.* Above all, the result of this contemptible invasion, which had been hindered from producing the most alarming consequences solely by the intervention of British soldiers, went far to lessen the confidence of the dominant party in Ireland in their own strength, and diminish their aversion to a closer and more indissoluble connection with Great

* This opinion was strongly expressed in a letter of Lord Cornwallis to the Duke of Portland. "The orderly behaviour of the British [militia] regiments in their quarters, and their conciliating manners towards the people of this country, form so striking a contrast to the conduct of the Irish militia, and impress the inhabitants with so favourable an opinion of the manners and disposition of their fellow-subjects in the sister kingdom, that, exclusive of any consideration for the defence of this island, in a political view I regret their departure."—MARQUESS CORNWALLIS *to* DUKE OF PORTLAND, *August* 23, 1799; *Cornwallis Correspondence*, iii. 126.

"The necessity of keeping a considerable number of British troops here is obvious, and I should recommend that every means might be taken to induce some regiments of English militia to relieve those which are now serving in Ireland."—MARQUESS CORNWALLIS *to* DUKE OF PORTLAND, *December* 15, 1798; *Cornwallis Correspondence*, iii. 19.

CHAP. I.

1799.

59. Results of the rebellion.

Britain; and on that account it was regarded by Lord Castlereagh as a fortunate event.*

The suppression of the rebellion, and defeat of the French invasion intended to revive it, left the Government at liberty to conclude the important and arduous duty of disposing of the State prisoners. This was a very serious and most laborious undertaking; for, between the landing of the French and February 1799, no less than 380 persons had been tried by court-martial, of whom 134 had been capitally convicted, and 90 executed. Large as this number was according to the more humane ideas of recent times, it fell greatly short of what the loyal party demanded, who besieged the Irish Government with representations as to the danger of "the ruinous system of lenity," and even made some impression on Mr Pitt and the Ministry in London. Lord Cornwallis and Lord Castlereagh, however, stood firm, and persisted in the humane and conciliatory policy. The surrender of the French and suppression of the rebellion enabled them to dispense with the extreme system of courts-martial, unavoidable during insurrection; and the numerous prisoners who still remained were handed over to the civil power to be disposed of by the judges on the circuits. This led to collisions between the civil and military authorities, which required all the patience and prudence of the Lord-Lieutenant to adjust. The labour undergone by Lord Cornwallis in revising and considering the cases was enormous; for they were all, in serious cases, submitted to his revisal, and their number was very great. Exclusive of

* "The force that will be disposable when the troops from England arrive, cannot fail to dissipate every alarm; and I consider it peculiarly advantageous that we shall owe our security so entirely to the interposition of Great Britain. I have always been apprehensive of that false confidence which might arise from an impression that security had been obtained by our own exertions. Nothing would tend so much to make the public mind impracticable with a view to that future settlement, without which we can never hope for any permanent tranquillity."—LORD CASTLEREAGH *to* MR PITT, *September* 7, 1798; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, i. 337.

those tried at the assizes, that upright nobleman *decided personally on* 400 *men*, out of which 81 were executed; 418 persons were banished or transported! In this laborious working out of the lenient system he was cordially supported by Lord Castlereagh, but they two stood nearly alone in these humane efforts, and incurred no small blame from the home Government, as well as nearly all in authority in Dublin, for persisting in it.* The devastation produced by the rebellion, though it was only partial in the country, was very great. The claims for damages sent in to Government, after the rebellion was over, amounted to no less than £1,023,000, of which £515,000 was from the county of Wexford. The total damage done by the insurrection was estimated at £3,000,000. At least thirty thousand persons on the two sides perished in this melancholy conflict.[1]†

[1] Lord Castlereagh to Mr Wickham, March 6, 1799; Cornwallis Corresp. iii. 90.

60. Renewed dangers of French invasion.

What, more than any other circumstance, tended to nourish the belief in England that Lord Cornwallis and Lord Castlereagh had carried the lenient system too far, was the slow progress made, or rather the total want of any progress at all, in really conciliating the affections of any part of the disaffected population. Notwithstanding the amnesty, the great number of prisoners convicted whose lives had been spared, and the removal of the more obnoxious militia regiments to Great Britain, it was painfully evident that not a step in advance had been made, either in awakening the gratitude or lessening the hostility of the United Irishmen; while, on the other hand, the feelings of indignation excited in the breasts of the

* "At present there is a general, I may say universal, persuasion [in London] that lenient measures have been carried too far; and it is a fixed opinion, accompanied by a disposition to attribute the calamities with which Ireland is now threatened to a departure from the system adopted by Lord Camden." —MR WICKHAM *to* LORD CASTLEREAGH, *London, March* 4, 1799; *Cornwallis Correspondence*, iii. 90.

† They were estimated by Moore, in his *Life of Lord Edward Fitzgerald*, much higher—at 20,000 on the part of the royalists and 50,000 on that of the rebels; but he had no data for the computation.—MOORE'S *Fitzgerald*, ii. 349; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, i. 466.

CHAP. I. 1798.

extreme Orange party, especially in Dublin, knew no bounds.* Thus the danger seemed imminent of losing one party in the State without gaining the other. Add to this that it was well known by secret but certain information that the French Government, awakened when it was too late to a sense of the inestimable value of the opportunity they had let slip, were making the utmost efforts to regain it, and that the invasion of the west of Ireland would probably be renewed in spring, not with eleven hundred, but thirty thousand men.† It did not lessen the terrors of such a descent, that it was to be headed by Generals Buonaparte, Hoche, Desaix, and the most renowned generals of France. To add to the embarrassments of the Lord-Lieutenant at this time, the British Government, having learned that an expedition to Egypt, with a view to an ultimate blow at India, was in

* "In truth, my lord, I must plainly tell you that the unaccountable conduct of the present Lord-Lieutenant, which has rendered him not only an object of disgust, but of abhorrence, to every loyal man I have conversed with since my return from England, has induced many persons to oppose a union, who, if uninfluenced by resentment against the Marquess Cornwallis, would have given no opposition."—DR DUIGENAN *to* LORD CASTLEREAGH, *Dec.* 20, 1798; *Cornwallis Correspondence*, iii. 90.

† "If Ireland should be attacked again, it was to be with from 20,000 to 30,000 men; but which, from the late havoc among their shipping and seamen, is next to an impossibility. The grand object of the French is, as they term it themselves, London. *Delenda est Carthago* is their particular end. Once in England, they think they would speedily indemnify themselves for all their expenses, and recruit their ruined finances. The navy of England, crossing them in all their monstrous views, is peculiarly obnoxious to them. One of their most particular reasons for attacking Ireland, with a view to sever it from England, is to strike a mortal blow at the navy of Great Britain, by cutting off, as they say, England's *right arm*—the seamen and provisions for the navy. The British navy, in case they should be able to carry their horrid schemes into practice, is to be partly burnt and partly carried into the ports of France; thus clipping, as they say, for ever, the wings of the *English Algerines*. In case of the failure of the expeditions to Ireland and to the East Indies, and in case of a peace with the Continental powers, an attack will be made on England. The French Directory will sacrifice 100,000 men in the attempt, and they are to live at free quarters, as Buonaparte did in Italy, with this difference, that very little restraint will be laid on the soldiery, either as to pillage or morality. The means for landing these men are the various kinds of shipping and small craft in the different ports of France and Holland, from the Texel to Havre-de-Grace; and the time will be the long and stormy nights in the winter season." — *Secret Memoir from a French Officer; Castlereagh Correspondence*, i. 410.

the contemplation of the French Directory, sent to Lord Cornwallis to know how many regiments *he could spare* for service in these distant regions! In despair at the numerous difficulties from friends, foes, and Government, with which he was surrounded, and the failure of all attempts to pacify the country, or reconcile its parties to each other, Lord Cornwallis was on the point of resigning his appointment.[1]

[1] Cornwallis Corresp. ii. 356.

61. Views of Lord Cornwallis and Lord Castlereagh on the Irish Government.

These accumulated evils, which, so far from being lessened, were materially increased, after the defeat of the French invasion, and the proof thereby afforded of the narrow escape which the nation had made from civil war and possible dismemberment, more than ever confirmed Lord Cornwallis and Lord Castlereagh in the opinion that if Ireland was to be rendered of any value to Great Britain, or even preserved as an integral part of the empire, it was absolutely necessary that the system of government in the island should be changed, and that it should be ruled on imperial principles, without reference to the ascendancy of any one party over another in the country itself. The reason of this cannot be better explained than in Lord Cornwallis's own words, in a letter to Mr Pitt:—"It has always appeared to me a desperate measure for the British Government to make an irrevocable alliance with a small party in Ireland (which party has derived all its consequence from, and is, in fact, entirely dependent upon the British Government) to wage eternal war against the Papists and Presbyterians of this kingdom, which two sects, from the fairest calculations, compose about nine-tenths of the community. If the danger of such an act should strike his Majesty's Ministers, as I trust to God it will, in the same forcible light, it comes then to be considered whether a union with the Protestants will afford a temporary respite from the spirit of faction and rebellion which so universally pervades this island, and whether the Catholics will patiently wait for what is called emancipation from the justice of the united

CHAP. I. 1798.

Parliament. If we are to reason on the future from the past, I should think that most people would answer these questions in the negative, even if it could be supposed that there would be no mischievous intervention on the part of the English Opposition, from which quarter I am convinced that you will not flatter yourself with the hope of such conscientious forbearance. Upon this view of the subject, if it is in contemplation ever to extend the privileges of the Union to the Roman Catholics, the present appears to be the only opportunity which the British Ministry can have of obtaining any credit from the boon which must otherwise in a short time be extorted from them."[1]

[1] Lord Cornwallis to Mr Pitt, Oct. 17, 1798; Cornwallis Corresp. ii. 418, 419.

62. Mr Pitt's projects for pacifying Ireland.

In these opinions Mr Pitt fully concurred; and his anxiety on the subject was such, that it absorbed his whole attention even amidst the pressing exigencies of the French war.* He was determined, like Lord Cornwallis, to concede emancipation to the Roman Catholics; but there was no small danger, if it was made an integral part of the plan of union, that the whole measure would be lost by the opposition of the Irish Protestants in Parliament, coupled with the violence and recklessness of the Catholics themselves in the country. For this reason, though with much regret, and after great consideration, he resolved to bring forward, in the first instance, the projected union, "unencumbered with any condition as to emancipation," and to trust to the influence of time to calm the passions now so strongly excited. His ideas were identical with those expressed by Lord Cornwallis at this time in a letter to the Duke of Portland.† He had a

* "Mr Pitt is eager and anxious to the greatest degree with respect to Ireland, and it is the subject on which he contemplates most, and is the most uneasy. . . . I read your last letter to Mr Pitt, who was much pleased with its liberality. He entirely approves your conduct, and so, as far as I learn, does every one. . . . My mind is quite reconciled to the measure [union], and I am very happy again."—EARL CAMDEN *to* LORD CASTLEREAGH, *October* 11, 1798; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, i. 391.

† "The quick succession of important events during the short period of my lieutenancy has frequently diverted my attention from the pursuit of

long interview with the Earl of Clare, Lord Chancellor of Ireland, on this subject, at which his views were fully and forcibly expressed. They embraced an *immediate* union of the two countries, and after that, such a measure of emancipation as might satisfy the just demands of the Roman Catholics, and terminate by equitable measures the seditious spirit of their clergy. His plan on this delicate matter was to make some State provision for the Roman Catholic clergy, and oblige every Catholic priest to take a licence from the Crown for performing ecclesiastical functions, on pain of banishment if he officiated without it.*

that great question, How this country can be governed and preserved, and rendered a source of strength and power, instead of remaining a useless and almost intolerable burden, to Great Britain. Sorry am I to say that I have made no further progress than to satisfy myself that a perseverance in the system which has hitherto been pursued can only lead us from bad to worse, and, after exhausting the resources of Britain, must end in the total separation of the two countries. The principal personages here who have long been in the habit of deriding the counsels of the Lord-Lieutenants, are perfectly well-intentioned, and entirely attached and devoted to the British connection, but they are blinded by their passions and prejudices, talk of nothing but strong measures, and arrogate to themselves the exclusive knowledge of a country of which, from their mode of governing it, they have, in my opinion, proved themselves totally ignorant. . . . I have at all times received the greatest assistance from Lord Castlereagh, whose prudence, talents, and temper I cannot sufficiently commend. No man will, I believe, be so sanguine as to think that any measures which Government can adopt would have an immediate effect on the minds of the people; and I am by no means prepared to say what those should be which slowly and progressively tend to that most desirable object. I have hitherto been chiefly occupied in checking the growing evil; but so perverse and ungovernable are the tempers here, that I cannot flatter myself that I have been very successful. With regard to future plans, I can only say that some mode must be adopted to soften the hatred of the Catholics to our Government. Whether this can be done by advantages held out to them from a union with Great Britain, by some provision for their clergy, or by some modification of tithe, which is the grievance of which they complain, I will not presume to determine. The first of these propositions is undoubtedly the most desirable, if the dangers with which we are surrounded will admit of our making the attempt; but the dispositions of the people at large, and especially of the north, must be previously felt. The Chancellor [of Ireland] is much disposed to this measure."—MARQUESS CORNWALLIS *to* DUKE OF PORTLAND, *Sept.* 16, 1798; *Cornwallis Correspondence*, ii. 404, 405.

* "MY DEAR LORD,—I have seen Mr Pitt, the Chancellor [Eldon], and the Duke of Portland, who seem to feel very sensibly the critical situation of our damnable country, and that the Union alone can save it. I should have hoped that what has passed would have opened the eyes of every man in England to the insanity of their past conduct with respect to the Papists of Ireland; but I

CHAP. I.

1798.

63. Appointment of Lord Castlereagh as Secretary for Ireland, in lieu of Mr Pelham. Nov. 16.

Towards the success of these great measures, which were sure to encounter the most violent opposition from the whole of the extreme Protestant party which had hitherto governed Ireland, it was indispensable that Government should have the aid of a man, holding the important and responsible situation of Secretary, whose views were entirely in unison with theirs. Mr Pelham, who still nominally held that office, conscientiously entertained opinions adverse to any further concession to the Roman Catholics; and in consequence, his removal before the measure was brought forward was a matter of necessity. Government was considerably embarrassed in the choice of his successor. Lord Cornwallis, to whom the great abilities and judgment of Lord Castlereagh were well known, wrote in the strongest terms to Mr Pitt and the Duke of Portland, recommending his appointment to that office:—"I know," said he to the latter, "that with some few exceptions it has been a rule that the Irish Secretary should not be an Irishman; but still exceptions have been made, and in no case could they have been with more propriety admitted, than to bring forward at so im-

can very plainly perceive that they were as full of their Popish projects as ever. I trust, and I hope I am not deceived, that they are fairly inclined to give them up, and to bring the measure forward unencumbered with the doctrine of emancipation. Lord Cornwallis has intimated his acquiescence in this point; Mr Pitt is decided upon it, and I think he will keep his colleagues steady. Most fortunately, we have a precedent in the Articles of the Union with Scotland, which puts an end to all difficulty on the only point insisted on by Lord Cornwallis, of which they are equally tenacious here. By one of the Articles it is stipulated that every member of the Parliament of Great Britain shall take the oath of supremacy, &c. on his taking his seat, *unless it shall be otherwise provided for by Parliament.* So that it cannot admit of a question, that a similar provision should be made for Ireland, which Mr Pitt is perfectly satisfied shall be done. He is also fully sensible of the necessity of establishing some effectual civil control over the Popish clergy, which he thinks will be best effected by allowing very moderate stipends to them, and obliging every priest to take a licence from the Crown for performing ecclesiastical functions, on pain of perpetual banishment if he shall officiate without it. . . . If I have been in any manner instrumental in persuading the Ministers here to bring forward this very important measure, unencumbered with a proposition which must have swamped it, I shall rejoice very much in the pilgrimage which I have made."—EARL CLARE, *Lord Chancellor of Ireland, to* LORD CASTLEREAGH, *Oct.* 16, 1798; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, i. 393, 394.

portant a crisis a man of Lord Castlereagh's talents, who possesses the general esteem of his countrymen, and who knows too well the real interests of Ireland to suppose that they can be promoted by any measures that are not equally favourable to the welfare and prosperity of Great Britain."[1] And to Mr Pitt he wrote on the same day: "I have just received a letter from Mr Pelham, notifying his resignation. I need not, I am sure, repeat my earnest wishes in favour of Lord Castlereagh."[2] Mr Pitt, at first, was unwilling to break through the rules hitherto observed, that the Secretary for Ireland should be a British subject, both to secure a due attention to the imperial interests, and to avoid the hostility or suspicion of partiality which would probably attach to any Irishman, in the present divided state of the country, appointed to that office. But the high opinion which he entertained, and which was confirmed from so many quarters, of Lord Castlereagh's judgment, talents, and temper, soon overcame these scruples, and the appointment was conferred on him.*

[1] Lord Cornwallis to the Duke of Portland, Nov. 7, 1798; Cornwallis Corresp. ii. 428.

[2] Ibid.

Lord Castlereagh was now fairly launched on the stream of political life, and his appointment gave the greatest satisfaction to Lord Cornwallis.† In the outset of his career a task of no ordinary difficulty lay before

* "When I first conversed with Mr Pitt upon your continuing Secretary (was Mr Pelham to remain in England), I found a prejudice in his mind, as well as in that of others, against an Irishman occupying that office. The line you have adopted, and the perfect impartiality you have shown, have so much taken off that prejudice in Pitt's mind, that he appeared, when I saw him at Walmer, to have totally overcome those prejudices to which I have alluded, and to wish that the decision was taken by Pelham *not to return*, and to appoint you."—LORD CAMDEN *to* LORD CASTLEREAGH, *August* 31, 1798; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, i. 325.

† "Lord Castlereagh's appointment gave me great satisfaction, and although I admit the propriety of the general rule, yet as he is so very unlike an Irishman, I think he has a just claim to an exception in his favour. . . . When I found a man in the actual execution of the duty possessed of all the necessary qualifications, with a perfect knowledge of the characters and connections of the principal personages in this country, I felt it to be my duty, at this very important moment, to press his appointment in the strongest terms."—LORD CORNWALLIS *to the* DUKE OF PORTLAND, *November* 20, 1798; *Cornwallis Correspondence*, ii. 439.

CHAP. I. 1798. 64.

him. He was brought into high office expressly to carry through the great measure of the Union in the Irish House of Commons, of which, *ex officio*, he had now become leader. To accomplish this immediately after the rebellion, and when its embers were still smouldering in many parts of the country, seemed almost an impossibility. To the reluctance which an ancient and high-spirited people always feel against being absorbed and, as it were, merged in a greater State, was to be added the condition of the country and the unprecedented exasperation which prevailed on both sides. The rebels openly declared their determination to exterminate the Orangemen; the Protestants loudly called for continued executions, and strongly expressed their dissatisfaction if any rebel was pardoned. Add to this another difficulty of a peculiar kind which was attached to this question, and which augmented to a most serious degree the obstacles with which it was beset. The English and Protestant party, by whose loyalty and assistance the rebellion had been put down, were the most determined opponents of the Union. They were so not only from the strong and estimable feeling of nationality, but from other motives of a less disinterested kind. They had long regarded the country as an appanage to be farmed out for their exclusive advantage; and they entertained the most serious apprehensions, not without reason, that a union with Great Britain would be the signal for an immediate stoppage of their separate influence, and a sharing with England of the emoluments, offices, and honours which had hitherto been exclusively enjoyed by themselves. Religious zeal added to these already grave causes of discord; and the Protestant leaders generally regarded a union with England as the first step in a series of changes which would, in their ultimate effects, lead to the resumption of the church lands and the establishment of the Romish faith in Ireland. The Catholics too, it was feared, might be brought to concur in the same views; and, in the

Great difficulties of the duties with which he was charged.

transports of their animosity against the "Sassenach," unite with their present antagonists to expel the stranger, in the hope that their preponderance of numbers would ultimately secure for them the command of their country.

65. Adaptation of Lord Castlereagh's character for the task.

Notwithstanding these difficulties, it was indispensable to make the attempt; for Ireland had now been brought to such a state by long mismanagement, and the present violence of parties at each other, that it was impossible to go on with the existing system of government unless something was done to arrest its downward progress. Ireland, as Lord Cornwallis observed, would, if the present course was persevered in, so far from being a source of strength, become an element of weakness, which might in the end prove fatal to the empire. The character and disposition of Lord Castlereagh qualified him in a peculiar manner to contend with these difficulties. To the strongest and most intense patriotic feelings he united a calm judgment, a temper the suavity of which nothing could ruffle, a resolution which nothing could deter. He anxiously desired to heal the wounds and restore the shattered fortunes of his country, but his good sense told him how alone this most desirable object could be accomplished; he saw it was not to be done, either by continuing the old system of governing Ireland by means of a Protestant oligarchy, ruling by corruption, and applying the influence of administration exclusively to their own purposes, or the new one of severing the country by a Jacobin insurrection from the neighbouring island, and constituting a Hibernian Republic in alliance with France, ruled by delegates chosen by Ribbon Lodges and Catholic priests. The only way in which it seemed possible to avoid this disastrous alternative was by forming a union with Great Britain, which might in the end amalgamate the two countries, and, setting aside separate interests, unite the ardour of the Celtic character to the steady energy of Anglo-Saxon enterprise. To attain this end was the great object of Lord Castlereagh; and it was not less so

CHAP. I. 1798.

of the Government, which intrusted to him the arduous duty of carrying it through against a hostile majority of the Irish House of Commons.

66. Opposition to it in Dublin.

No sooner was it whispered about the Castle of Dublin that a union with Great Britain was in contemplation, than the most violent opposition to it broke out in all quarters, and those hitherto deemed the most secure and influential. The barristers in the four courts were the first to take the alarm; and as the opinion of so able and influential a body of men, hitherto the strongest supporters of Government, had necessarily great weight, it occasioned no small embarrassment to the Administration. The shopkeepers and tradesmen in Dublin were equally decided on the question. They naturally anticipated a serious diminution of their profits and business if the Parliament were removed from College Green, and the capital reduced merely to the viceregal residence, or possibly the rank only of a first-rate provincial town. The great commercial towns of Cork, Limerick, and Belfast, were more favourably disposed, as the advantages of a closer union with England were obvious to the great trading and mercantile interests; but even there the violence of party and sectarian spirit had produced a very serious division. The great body of the Catholics stood aloof, and took little share, one way or the other, in the controversy. They regarded it as a quarrel among their oppressors, from which they had some hopes advantage might in the end accrue to themselves. But among the great body of the Protestant noblemen and landed proprietors in the country, who had hitherto been accustomed to direct the Government in Dublin, the opposition was of the most serious and impassioned description.*

* "It would be hazardous to give any opinion so early on the public disposition towards a union. . . . As far as we have gone, I see nothing to discourage us. There certainly is not that positive prepossession in its favour which can be expected to render it a very popular question, but there is as little appearance of indignant resistance. The bar continues to feel most warmly upon it; even in this body the steps that have been taken seem to

Mr Pitt's views in regard to the Union, and the important measure of Catholic emancipation, which was so closely connected with it, were distinctly stated in a letter to Lord Cornwallis on November 17: "You will observe that, in what relates to the oaths to be taken by members of the United Parliament, the plan which we have sent copies [of, is founded on] the precedent I mentioned in a former letter of the Scotch Union; and on the grounds I before mentioned, I own I think this leaves the Catholic question on the only footing on which it can safely be placed. Mr Elliott, when he brought me your letter, stated very strongly all the arguments which he thought might induce us to admit the Catholics to Parliament and office; but I confess he did not satisfy me of the practicability of such a measure at this time, or of the propriety of attempting it. With respect to a provision for the Catholic clergy, and some arrangement respecting tithes, I am happy to find a uniform opinion in favour of the proposal among all the Irish I have seen; and I am more and more convinced that those measures, with some effectual mode to enforce the residence of *all* ranks of the Protestant clergy, offer the best chance of gradually putting an end to the evils most felt in Ireland."[1]

67. Mr Pitt's views on the Union and Catholic emancipation.

[1] Mr Pitt to Lord Cornwallis, Nov. 17, 1798; Cornwallis Corresp. ii. 440.

As time went on the opposition to the measure, especially from the bar and citizens of Dublin, became daily greater; and although the leading men of the kingdom were divided in opinion on the subject, and some of the most influential, when consulted, declared in its fa-

68. Alarming opposition to the Union.

have had their effect: there is more disposition to reason the point, and less to bring it to a question of arms. Perhaps it is too much to expect to divide this learned body; I do not despair, however, of having a respectable minority. Opposition from the citizens of Dublin is not less to be expected. There is every reason to hope that a different sentiment prevails at Cork; the Protestants and Catholics in that city (who seldom agree on any point) are both alive to the great commercial benefits they would derive from it; the same is said to be the feeling of Limerick: these towns cannot fail extensively to influence the province of Munster. There appears no indisposition on the part of the leading Catholics; on the contrary, I believe they will consider any transfer of power from their opponents as a boon."—LORD CASTLEREAGH *to* MR WICKHAM, *November* 23, 1798; *Cornwallis Correspondence*, ii. 443.

CHAP. I. 1798.

vour, yet there was soon reason to apprehend disturbances of the most serious kind if it were persisted in. The "Lawyers' corps of yeomanry," on 30th November, were ordered by their commander, Captain Saurin, "to assemble on Sunday next, to take into their consideration *a question of the greatest national* importance."[1] The meeting did take place, and strong resolutions condemnatory of the Union were passed; but a majority of the bar, though decidedly against the measure, had the good sense not to countenance, by their presence, a proceeding so very questionable as that of armed men deliberating on public measures. At this critical juncture the Government was much embarrassed by a demand made by the English militia regiments in Ireland, whose time of service, for which they had volunteered, had expired, and who, thoroughly disgusted with duty there, now insisted on returning to their own country. This demand at such a crisis, when the loyal party were violently excited on account of the projected Union, justly filled the Lord-Lieutenant with alarm; and he did not fail to represent to the English Government, that if this wish were carried into effect, Ireland would again be involved in civil war, and all hopes of carrying the Union must be given up. The Government accordingly issued a pressing circular to the commanders of English militia regiments in Ireland, urging them to prevail on their men to agree to remain a little longer, which had, in most cases, the desired effect; and, at the same time, as many of the Irish militia regiments as could be spared were sent to Great Britain and the Channel Islands.[2] * But still the opposition was so threatening, and the agita-

[1] Lord Castlereagh to Duke of Portland, Nov. 30, 1798; Cornwallis Corresp. ii. 454.

[2] Cornwallis Corresp. ii. 455; Castlereagh Corresp. i. 450.

* "I could not suffer myself to defer, even for a single day, my most earnest instances to your Excellency, to employ the most immediate and efficacious measures to represent to the commanding officers of those corps [the English militia regiments in Ireland] the extreme importance of their extending the time of their service, and that, great as has been the advantage which has been derived from their gallantry and liberality, the withdrawing themselves at this moment could not but be productive of dangers, of a magnitude to which they could never have attained but from the strength and confidence which

tion, especially in Dublin, so great, that in the beginning of December Lord Castlereagh was sent over by Lord Cornwallis to London to give the English Government personal explanations on the subject.*

69. Articles of the proposed Union, and Lord Castlereagh's views regarding it.

The principal articles of the proposed Treaty of Union transmitted by the Duke of Portland to Lord Cornwallis, and received on 16th November, were the same as those ultimately adopted, and will be found below. † They contained (Art. 4) a clause regarding the oath to be taken by members entering the United Parliament, evidently intend-

their gallantry could only have been capable of giving to the inhabitants of Ireland."—DUKE OF PORTLAND *to* MARQUESS CORNWALLIS, *November* 21, 1798; *Cornwallis Correspondence*, ii. 446.

* "I certainly should not recommend the immediate removal of any of the militia regiments, and I have no difficulty in declaring that, although the French appear for the present to have laid aside the intention of making any further attempts against Ireland, I think this country would be exposed to the most imminent danger of becoming again a scene of bloodshed and rebellion, and that all thoughts of uniting the two kingdoms must be given up if that force should now be withdrawn. Lord Castlereagh has informed your Grace of the spirit of opposition to the great measure now in agitation which has already manifested itself. I do not flatter myself with the hopes of obtaining any very disinterested opinion upon the subject on this side of the water, as I have not the smallest doubt that every man whom I might consult would advise such measures as he thought would best suit his private views, without having the smallest consideration for the public welfare."—LORD CORNWALLIS *to* DUKE OF PORTLAND, *December* 1, 1798; *Cornwallis Correspondence*, ii. 454.

† The articles were as follow :—

1. The kingdoms to be united, and the succession to remain as fixed by the existing laws.

2. The British Parliament to be unchanged. The Irish portion to be settled by an Irish Act.

3. Irish peers to enjoy the same privileges as Scotch peers.

4. All members of the United Houses to take the oaths now taken by British members; *but such oaths to be subject to such alterations as may be enacted by the United Parliament.*

5. The continuance of the present Irish Church Establishment to be a fundamental article of the Union.

6. The tariff in the French commercial treaty with England in 1786, to be adopted as between England and Ireland. Special provision to be made with reference to the export of salt provisions and linen to Great Britain and the colonies.

7. Revenue and debts.—The accounts to be kept separate. Ireland to pay ——[1] of the annual charges.

[1] Afterwards filled up with 7ths.

8. The Courts of Justice to be untouched. A final appeal to the House of Lords.

9. The Great Seal of England to remain; as also the Privy Council in Ireland, or else a committee of Privy Council there. The Lord-Lieutenant to remain, but not to be mentioned in the Act.—*Cornwallis Correspondence*, ii. 435.

CHAP. I. 1798.

ed, at some future period, to admit the Roman Catholics to both Houses of Parliament, though it was not deemed advisable to hazard the Union by making it an absolute condition at present. Lord Castlereagh's anxiety on this subject was extreme, and he lost no opportunity of enforcing these views in the strongest manner on the British Government. In a memoir dated November 12, they were stated with equal effect and justice:—"If the Catholic and Republican party can convince the Protestant landholders that it is for their interest to join with them in endeavouring to effect it [a separation from Great Britain], the thing is done. Great Britain, with all her naval superiority, could not long keep this country, almost half as large as her own, in the manner of garrison, by mere military force, and contrary to the will of the inhabitants, supported, as they would be, by every nation that envies her gigantic greatness; *i. e.*, by all the maritime powers, led on and animated by France. The present astonishing wealth and power of England are, it must be remembered, in a good measure *factitious*, *i. e.*, the effect of superior industry, enterprise, and art. They seem to be at their very acme of perfection. But advantages and acquirements of so very fluctuating and transitory a nature, if they cannot advance and increase, must recede and decline. Ireland, if *united*, would mightily tend to support, but if *disunited* and dissatisfied, would act as a dead weight about the neck of the sister country, to plunge her with more rapidity into the gulf of mediocrity, if not of utter ruin, and to give room for the alternate scale of France to emerge from under the vast pressure of its antagonist's commercial superiority.

70. Continued.

"The new, dangerous, and dashing spirit (to use a vulgar phrase), that actuates the councils of that political phenomenon, the French Republic, will, in the long run, force her competitor to adopt a somewhat similar line of conduct, in order to make head against her; to venture upon what, in ordinary cases and in common times, would

be regarded as very precipitous and hazardous measures. If the salvation of the two countries depends on their being further united, the matter must be finished in a session. We must not sit down with our arms across, and muse and talk on the subject for a century, as the Scotch and English did before they sanctioned a measure which has raised them to what they now are in the scale of nations. Long before a century shall pass away, democracy shall either have expired on the soil that gave it birth, or its Gallic apostles have carried their propaganda into every corner of Europe. There is no medium. The ambition of the ephemeral leaders in a small republic is circumscribed and kept within bounds by its very impotence. But as, in this case, the vast resources and active energies of the most numerous, stirring, and formidable people in Europe are wielded by men of the very first abilities and the most towering ambition, without which their situations were unattainable, it would be unreasonable to suppose that they should ever remain quiet for any length of time, that they should ever cease to foster rebellion in the neighbouring countries, or avail themselves of the strong party in their favour, which, if it does not always appear everywhere, is ready to start up on every prospect of assistance and success.

71. Concluded.

"Already have they developed the scheme by which they mean to subjugate Europe, and climb to universal (I can't call it monarchy, but) democracy, though, were I to give it its true name, I should rather call it *despotism*, for no countries are more severely used than those *subject to a republic*. In the short period of a few years, no fewer than five newly-created republics have started up, in order to defend, together with the Rhine, the most vulnerable parts of the frontier from the Mediterranean to the ocean. Nor is it by way of defence merely that these new states appear formidable—though in this light they are truly so, as the continental powers must

CHAP. I. 1798.

march either across them or the Rhine to attack France—they are, besides, so many craters, which the grand volcano (a better name than the great nation) has thrown up on its sides, to deluge with its doctrines and reduce under its dominion (or protection, as it is called) every neighbouring state that weakness may render an easy conquest, or that superior spirit and power may encourage to arrest its ambitious progress, or circumscribe its overgrown power."[1]

[1] Memoir on Union; Castlereagh Corresp., i. 442, 443.

72. Importance of this memoir.

This memoir is very remarkable, as containing a proof how early Lord Castlereagh had discerned the real danger of the French Revolution as *a standing menace to the independence of every neighbouring state*, and the necessity of the Irish Union as a means of enabling Great Britain to aid in checking its ambitious designs. It affords the key to his whole future career when called to the helm during the most perilous period of the contest with that power; and those who charge Lord Castlereagh with being an *esprit borné*, behind the light of the age, are recommended to search for a memoir at this period, or for long after, evincing so clear and prophetic an insight into futurity as this presents.

73. Trial and death of Wolfe Tone. Nov. 12.

A mournful tragedy occurred at this period, which happily closed the long catalogue of Irish military trials consequent on the rebellion. Mr Wolfe Tone was a person of a very different stamp from most of the leaders of the Irish rebellion. He was more akin to Robespierre, Danton, Marat, and the other chiefs of the French Revolution. He had all their audacity and recklessness of consequences, all their sanguinary projects for exterminating their enemies, but at the same time all their delusive philanthropic views as to the ultimate regeneration of their country. He was one of the ablest and most determined leaders of the Irish rebellion, and one to whom, in justice to others, no mercy could be extended. Arrested and brought to trial before a court-martial in Dublin, he made an eloquent defence, in which he endeavoured to prove that, having accepted a commission in the French service, he was no

longer answerable to the English treason law. This defence was justly overruled by the court; but their conduct in not allowing him to read part of the written defence he had prepared was not equally justifiable, and therefore it is given below.* He was convicted, and sentenced to death; and his *Memoirs*, published by his son, prove that if death should ever be inflicted for purely political offences, it was rightly adjudged in his case. On the morning of his execution, however, having obtained a razor, he cut his throat in prison, and, in spite of every effort to prolong his life, he died soon after. This melancholy event caused a great sensation, and, like many a similar catastrophe, produced in the end a beneficial result. It brought the civil and military powers fairly into collision; and had a material effect in terminating the sittings of the latter, which, in truth, from the suppression of the rebellion, were no longer necessary. It tended also, in some degree, to reconcile many hitherto averse to it to the Union, by demonstrating at once the accumulated social and political evils which had brought men of such stamp into a league for the overthrow of the Government, and the narrow escape which the nation had made from general massacre and miseries unutterable in the attempt to bring it about.[1] †

1798. Nov. 10.

Nov. 12.

[1] Cornwallis Corresp. ii. 433; Castlereagh Corresp. i. 445.

* The suppressed passage was as follows:—"I have laboured, in consequence, to create a people in Ireland, by raising three millions of my countrymen to the rank of citizens. I have laboured to abolish the infernal spirit of religious persecution by uniting the Catholics and Dissenters. To the former I owe more than can ever be repaid; the services I was so fortunate as to render them they rewarded munificently; but they did more: when the public cry was raised against me, when the friends of my youth swarmed off and left me alone, the Catholics did not desert me—they had the virtue even to sacrifice their own interests to a rigid principle of honour; they refused, though strongly urged, to disgrace a man who, whatever his conduct towards the Government might have been, had faithfully and conscientiously discharged his duty towards them; and in so doing, though it was in my own case, I will say they showed an instance of public virtue and honour of which I know not whether there exists another example."—*Wolfe Tone's Defence, Nov.* 10, 1798; *Cornwallis Correspondence*, ii. 433.

† "Tone is to be tried to-morrow. I am afraid these perpetual court-martials while the courts are sitting will become a subject for debate—they *are* of conversation."—E. COOKE, ESQ. *to* LORD CASTLEREAGH, *Nov.* 9, 1798; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, i. 432.

"Whilst the rebels were in the field in force, the necessity of punishment by

CHAP. I. 1798.

74. First movement towards the Union.

In the midst of these heartburnings and difficulties, the great measure of the Union was brought forward by Lord Castlereagh; and the reception it met with, in the very outset, gave an earnest of the extraordinary difficulties which it would have to encounter before it could be brought to a successful issue. Future times, relieved of the greatest difficulty with which the British Government had to contend at this critical period, will find it difficult to credit the general burst of indignation with which a measure was received which had no other object but to "extend to Ireland all the advantages of order, commercial prosperity, and security, which the British portion of the empire enjoyed, by a legislative incorporation."[1] Not only the great features, but all the details, down to the minutest particulars of this grand measure, were worked out by Lord Castlereagh, both in their original conception in the Cabinet and in the subsequent contest in the Legislature;

[1] Castlereagh Corresp. i. 14.

military tribunals was so obvious as not to admit of a question; indeed, the degree of public danger was then such as to preclude the ordinary courts of law from sitting. Latterly the rebellion has degenerated, particularly in the counties of Wicklow, Wexford, Kildare, Westmeath, and Dublin, into a petty warfare, not less afflicting to the loyal inhabitants, though less formidable to the State. In those counties the number of persons taken in the commission of the most shocking crimes, still acting upon treasonable and systematic principles, has been such as to render it impossible to trust to the usual administration of justice for the punishment of the offenders: indeed, in Wicklow and Wexford it has been found altogether impracticable to hold the assizes. The two jurisdictions being in activity at the same time, could not well fail to clash sooner or later, as has happened in Tone's case. His conviction will be effected with equal certainty by civil as by military law, his trial being had in the metropolis, where the courts are open; and, under the circumstances of the case, it is not of that description upon which it would be expedient to bring the matter to issue: but it certainly deserves to be well considered, should the country remain unsettled for any length of time, whether both jurisdictions are not requisite. . . . It was before resisted upon the principle that there was less violence done to the constitution in giving indemnity to those who have acted illegally for the preservation of the State, than in enacting laws so adverse to the usual spirit of our Legislature. . . . I trust, however, that the internal situation of the country may improve, now the prospect of foreign assistance is in a great measure at an end, and that we may be saved an alternative so unpleasant as that of yielding to this tormenting evil, rather than risk the adoption of a strong remedy, or of being driven to extend the powers of a military code to civil crimes, if crimes can be called civil which are invariably committed in arms."—LORD CASTLEREAGH *to* MR WICKHAM, *Nov.* 16, 1798; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, i. 446, 447.

and it is not going too far to assert, that it was mainly owing to the courage, perseverance, judgment, and talent, as well as tact and temper with which he supported it, that its ultimate success, fraught as it was with the best interests of the empire, is to be ascribed.[1]

[1] Ibid.

75. Rapid progress of the resistance to the Union.

For some little time after it had become generally known that a proposal for uniting the two countries was about to be brought forward, there was a sort of stupor in the public mind on the subject, and hopes were even entertained at the Castle that it would pass without any very serious opposition; but they were soon undeceived. The barristers of the four courts, as already noticed, were the first to take it up, which they did warmly and almost unanimously. Several able pamphlets appeared against the measure from the pen of gentlemen, supporters of the Government on ordinary occasions, particularly Sir Jonah Barrington, Judge of the Court of Admiralty, and Mr Bushe, afterwards Solicitor-General and Chief-Justice of Ireland, and Mr Jebb, M.P. These productions quickly blew the embers into a flame. The violence rapidly increased, and soon became excessive. The general strain of the argument against the measure was, that absenteeism would extend, the interest of the debt to England increase, their manufactures be ruined by the removal of all protection against British manufactures, the proprietors and shopkeepers in Dublin be impoverished, and the country drained of all its money to enrich the neighbouring island. What much strengthened the side of the opponents of the measure was, that the strongest arguments in favour of it could not be brought forward, they being founded on the misgovernment of the country under former administrations; which would not only have sounded strange in the mouth of the supporters of the present administration, but gone far to vindicate the rebellion in the eyes of those at a distance.[2]

[2] Mr Cooke to Lord Castlereagh, Dec. 15, 1798; Castlereagh Corresp. ii. 43-45.

While this vehement struggle was commencing among the Protestants, the great body of the Roman Catholics,

CHAP. I.

1798.

who, from their influence in the counties, might be likely to cast the balance one way or other, remained inactive, and to appearance indifferent. They were not so, however, in reality, but they were distracted by opposite considerations. On the one hand, they felt that a union with a country of such influence and resources as Great Britain would immediately weaken, and in the end probably extinguish, the ascendancy of that Protestant oligarchy which had hitherto ruled the country; and thus remove many of the most serious evils under which it has so long laboured, and restore the Catholics to that rank and position to which, by their great preponderance in numbers, they were entitled. On the other hand, this very circumstance rendered the far-seeing Catholic leaders very doubtful of the policy of supporting the measure. Their great numerical superiority, with the growing tendency of the age towards popular institutions, rendered it next to certain that in a separate legislature they would have a majority, and, as long as they were kept separate, give them the entire command of Ireland. Thus the Catholic body were irresolute and divided. Lord Fingall and the higher part of their number inclined to the support of the measure, but in so feeble and languid a way that little was to be expected from their co-operation; and the utmost that could reasonably be hoped for was, that they would be neutral in the approaching conflict.[1]

76. Views of the Catholics on the question.

[1] Castlereagh Corresp. ii. 45-51.

77. General union of the Protestants against the measure.

The most formidable opposition to the measure was found among the barristers and citizens of Dublin, the country gentlemen over all Ireland, and the lower ranks of the Orangemen and Protestants of the north. With most of them it was not mere resistance, but absolute horror.* The opposition of these classes was the more to be

* "When I warn you of the universal disgust, nay horror, that Dublin, and even all the lower part of the north, have at the idea of the Union, I do not do it with any idea that my opinion would have a weight in turning Government from their design, but from a wish that they should know what they have to contend with; for I confess to you, that I fear more the effect the measure

apprehended that they were the very ones which had stood most resolutely by the Government in the late crisis; that their representatives had hitherto formed a decided, and in fact the ruling majority in the Irish Parliament; and that, apart from the influence of the Crown and that of a few disinterested patriots, there was no counter-influence in the country which could be relied on except the lukewarm and doubtful support of those who had so recently been arrayed in open rebellion against them. It must be admitted that a more arduous and hazardous undertaking could hardly be figured than such a one at such a crisis; and the difficulty was much enhanced by the circumstance that whatever might be the prospective and ultimate advantages of the measure, it threatened, in the first instance at least, to inflict a great and serious injury on many of the most important vested interests of the country.

78. Memoir by Lord Castlereagh on the subject.

In a very able memoir on this subject submitted at this time to the Duke of Portland as Home Secretary by Lord Castlereagh, the reality and magnitude of these threatened interests was very clearly brought out. The classes which he stated as likely to be injured by the direct effects of the Union, were the borough proprietors, the primary and secondary interests in counties, the barristers, the purchasers of seats in the present Parliament, and the inhabitants of Dublin. He estimated the loss directly accruing to these classes from the Union at £1,455,000.* With truth did he add: "If the above

will have on the minds of the people, particularly those that were the best affected, than I do the measure itself."—J. C. BERESFORD, ESQ., *to* LORD CASTLEREAGH, *December* 19, 1798; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, ii. 51.

* "It is evident that borough property must suffer a diminution of value by the proposed arrangement. There being but one member for each county intended, thirty-two individuals, whose weight now returns them to Parliament, must stand absolutely excluded. The primary interests, though not threatened with exclusion, are exposed to new contests. The barristers in Parliament look to it as depriving them of their best means of advancement, and of their present business in the courts, if they support it, the attorneys having formed a combination for this purpose. The purchasers are averse to it, as being a surrender without advantage of the money paid for

CHAP. I. 1799.

statement approaches towards the truth, there is a most formidable principle of resistance existing in the nature of the arrangement, which, connected with the general strength of opposition and supported by local clamour, it is difficult for the weight of administration or the merits of the measure itself to overcome. What measure of national advantage could prevail on the individuals of whom Parliament is composed to sacrifice a million and a half of their own private property for the public benefit? National calamity or popular authority might compel them to do so; but the danger must be more imminent, and their preservation be more obviously and immediately connected than it is, or else the popular authority must be very strong in favour of the measure, before they will yield their private to their public feel-

their present seats. The individuals connected with Dublin, right or wrong, consider a union as tending to lower the value of their property.

"Some estimate may be made of the amount of value thus supposed to operate against the measure. It is proposed to alternate 108 boroughs. Taking an Irish seat at £2000, and an English seat at £4000, the loss of value on an Irish borough would be about one-half, or £7000 on each—making, in the gross, £756,000. Estimating a county seat at an equal value, where the superior pride of the situation counterbalances its uncertainty, the loss on thirty-two seats extinguished amounts to £224,000. The superior value of the other seat cannot, as in the boroughs, operate as a set-off, as it does not in the case of counties belong to the same individual; it can only counterbalance, in a certain degree, to the person possessing the leading interests, the superior risk and expense to which he will be exposed. It is difficult to estimate the private interests of the barristers, but it must be pretty considerable, as they are about thirty in number, many of whom purchased their seats—say £4000 each—taking their seats and prospects of situation together, which gives a result of £200,000. The purchasers into the present Parliament are very numerous; supposing only fifty at £1500 each, seats being peculiarly cheap, gives £75,000. The Dublin influence it is difficult to estimate; it arises out of property and houses, lands, canal shares, &c., which the owners very falsely conceive would suffer in Dublin—call it £200,000. The calculation will then stand thus:—

Boroughs, ...	£756,000
Counties, ...	224,000
Barristers, ...	200,000
Purchasers, ...	75,000
Dublin, ...	200,000
	£1,455,000"

—*Memorandum relative to Opposition to the Union, by* LORD CASTLEREAGH, *sent to* DUKE OF PORTLAND, *Feb.* 1, 1799; *Castlereagh Corresp.*, ii. 150, 151.

ings. Without presuming to recommend any alteration of the plan of representation decided on, it may be observed that, holding as it does a fair hand between the popular and borough influence, like all compromises, by its impartiality it pleases neither of the parties. If the obstacles above alluded to are so serious as to retard, if not defeat, this great measure, it is worth looking at the possibility of diminishing or removing some of them. The borough objection may be removed at once by pecuniary compensation; the county impediment, by giving a second member. The other three classes cannot be reconciled by any change in the distribution of the representation."[1]

[1] Lord Castlereagh to Duke of Portland, Feb. 1, 1799; Castlereagh Corresp. ii. 151, 152.

79. Views of Government and Lord Castlereagh on Catholic emancipation.

Deeply impressed with the numerous difficulties with which the measure was beset, and the hourly increasing strength of the opposition which was getting up against it, Lord Castlereagh clearly perceived and strongly impressed upon Government the absolute necessity, whatever might be done afterwards, of making the concession of the Catholic claim to seats in Parliament no part of the measure of Union. It was difficult enough to carry it without such a clog; with it, the attempt would be altogether hopeless. The Duke of Portland and Mr Pitt, while intending to grant emancipation, in the end entirely concurred in this opinion.* Lord Castlereagh saw that under the existing franchise the Roman Catholics, from their superior numbers, would

* "I wrote to the Lord-Lieutenant yesterday on the subject of his conversation with Lord Kenmare, in which I deprecated, in the strongest terms, any encouragement being given to the Catholics to hope for any alteration in their situation, as long as the Parliament of Ireland should continue in its present state. The more I consider that proposition, the more I am convinced that it never ought to be attempted, unless a union takes place; that, in the present circumstances—I mean the state of Ireland's present independence—it would be equally injurious to the orderly Catholics, who are now possessed of landed and personal property, and to the Protestants; and that it would once more deluge the country with blood; and that what is called Catholic emancipation cannot be attempted with safety to the persons of either persuasion but through the medium of a union, and by the means of a United Parliament." —DUKE OF PORTLAND *to* LORD CASTLEREAGH, *January* 29, 1799; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, ii. 147.

CHAP. I. 1798.

soon acquire the command of a purely Irish Parliament; and the moment they did so, nothing but an immediate civil war between them and the Protestants was to be anticipated, for the Catholics had the real and imaginary wrongs of more than a century to avenge. It would be otherwise in a United Parliament, for there the Catholics would be in as decided a minority as the Protestants would be in one in Ireland only. Therefore, it was that union must precede emancipation, and the former measure be unclogged by the latter, if success in either was to be looked for.[1]

[1] Castlereagh Corresp. ii. 142-153.

80. Increased resistance to the measure.

Meanwhile the excitement rapidly increased, and the opposition became more formidable as the time approached when the measure was to be brought forward in Parliament. Every effort was made on both sides to gain votes in the House of Commons in Dublin, by means of Government influence and imperial considerations on the one side, and appeals to religious enthusiasm and national traditions on the other. The bankers and merchants of Dublin met on the 18th December, the Lord Mayor in the chair, when strong resolutions condemnatory of the measures were passed unanimously, on the motion of Mr Latouche, seconded by Mr Beresford.* In several other counties equally hostile demonstrations were made, especially in the north, the stronghold hitherto of

Dec. 18.

* "Resolved, that, since the renunciation, in the year 1782, of the power of Great Britain to legislate for Ireland, the commerce and prosperity of this kingdom have eminently increased.

"Resolved, that we attribute these blessings, under Providence and the gracious favour of our beloved Sovereign, to the wisdom of the Irish Parliament.

"Resolved, that we look with abhorrence on any attempt to deprive the people of Ireland of their Parliament, and thereby of their constitution and immediate power of legislating for themselves.

"Resolved, that, impressed with every sentiment of loyalty to our King, and affectionate attachment to British connection, we conceive that to agitate in Parliament a question of legislative union between this kingdom and Great Britain would be highly dangerous and impolitic.

"Resolved unanimously, that the Lord Mayor be requested to sign these resolutions, in the name of the bankers and merchants of Dublin, and that the same be published in all the public papers."—*Castlereagh Correspondence*, ii. 48.

Protestantism and attachment to the British connection. Lord Cornwallis and Lord Castlereagh in vain exerted themselves to the utmost to win over, or at least neutralise the influence of, the Protestant magnates, who had hitherto been the chief supporters of Government; they were only partially successful. The Marquess of Downshire was a decided opponent; and his nominee in the county of Down, the colleague of Lord Castlereagh, voted against the measure when it was brought forward in Parliament. Lord Fingall and the Roman Catholics stood aloof in moody silence, neither supporting nor resisting the measure. So strongly was Lord Castlereagh impressed with the difficulties, all but insuperable, of the attempt, that he wrote to the Duke of Portland on January 2, that nothing but a firm resolution on the part of Government to carry it through at all hazards, and a general conviction that this was the case, could overcome these difficulties.* Nor were ruder appliances calculated for ruder minds awanting; for, in answer to a secret letter of Lord Castlereagh of the same date, Mr Wickham, on the 7th January, despatched a considerable sum of money to be at the Lord-Lieutenant's disposal.†

* "Nothing but an established conviction that the English Government will never lose sight of the Union till it is carried, can give the measure a chance of success. The friends of the question look with great anxiety for Mr Pitt's statement. It is not only of the last importance, from the ability with which the subject will be handled, but from the opportunity it will afford him of announcing to this country the determined purpose of Government in both kingdoms to be discouraged neither by defeat nor difficulty, but to agitate the question again and again till it succeeds. This principle is the foundation of our strength, and cannot be too strongly impressed on this side of the water. I have stated it without reserve to several, and it has universally been received by them as a pledge of our success, and that, with a purpose so manly, our friends cannot hesitate to stand by us."—LORD CASTLEREAGH *to* DUKE OF PORTLAND, *January* 2, 1799; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, ii. 81.

† "Immediately on the receipt of your lordship's letter, marked 'most secret,' I waited on the Duke of Portland at Burlington House, who, without loss of time, wrote both to Mr Pitt and Lord Grenville on that part of the letter which seemed to press the most, and I have the satisfaction to inform your lordship that a messenger will be sent off from hence in the course of

CHAP. I.

1799.

81. Lord Castlereagh's advice to Government on the language to be assumed in bringing forward the measure.

As the day of conflict in the Irish Parliament approached, which was towards the end of January, the efforts on both sides and the universal excitement became every hour greater. "We are making," said Lord Castlereagh, "every exertion to collect our strength on the first day of the session. Much depends in this country, at all times, on first impressions; it is, therefore, important to assume a tone of confidence, and to avow at the outset, boldly, the measure to which the speech alludes. Decided language on the address will strengthen us in our future proceedings. It is better to provoke the discussion than to wait for the attack. I shall endeavour prevail on the Chancellor to make one of his strong speeches in the Lords, which, thrown into circulation, will have its effect."[1] Thus early did Lord Castlereagh give proof of that resolution of character and fixity of purpose by which through the whole of life he was so eminently distinguished. The advice he gave was followed, as, in the circumstances, it was undoubtedly the most wise; and it was resolved to bring forward the outlines of the measure on the first night, and recommend it in the King's speech. Meanwhile Mr Pitt exerted himself personally to win over, or at least neutralise, the most important opponents of the measure, especially the Marquess of Downshire, but with very little effect; and set himself seriously to work to carry out Lord Castlereagh's suggestion as to the union of the exchequer of

[1] Castlereagh Corresp. ii. 85.

to-morrow, with the remittance particularly required for the present moment; and the Duke of Portland has every reason to hope that means will soon be found of placing a larger sum at the Lord-Lieutenant's disposal."—MR WICKHAM *to* LORD CASTLEREAGH, *January* 7, 1799 ("private and most secret"); *Castlereagh Correspondence*, ii. 82. The sum sent over on this occasion was £5000: the numbers of the notes are still to be found in the State Paper Office.—*Cornwallis Correspondence*, iii. 34. Lord Castlereagh answered on January 10:—"I have only a moment to acknowledge the receipt of your letters of the 7th. The *contents* of the messenger's despatches are very interesting. Arrangements, with a view to further communications of the same nature, will be highly advantageous, and the Duke of Portland may depend on their being carefully applied."—LORD CASTLEREAGH *to* MR WICKHAM, *January* 10, 1799; *Cornwallis Correspondence*, iii. 34.

the two countries, and their gradual approximation to an equality in matters of taxation.*

At length the eventful day arrived when the measure was brought forward in the House of Commons in both countries. It was announced in the King's speech in the British House, in terms which left no doubt that it was the settled determination of Government at all hazards to carry it through.† The subject was formally brought forward by Mr Pitt on the 31st of the same month, when he moved eight resolutions in favour of the Union. The Opposition was so ill advised as to move an amendment, which was done by Mr Sheridan; but the resolutions were carried by a majority of 140 to 15. In the House of Lords the question of an address, the echo of the speech, was carried without a division; and upon a conference of the two Houses, a joint address was presented to the King, and most graciously received. So far as Great Britain was concerned, therefore, the question was carried without difficulty, and both Parliament and the country were nearly unanimous on the subject.[1]

82. The Union is passed in the British House.

[1] Parl. Hist. xxxiv. 1471; Ann. Reg. 1801, 112, 113.

* "I received this morning your letter, enclosing a paper respecting the contribution of Ireland to the general expense, the suggestions of which, I think, entitled to great attention, particularly that (which is a very material addition to the ideas before stated) relating to the gradual equalisation of taxes, and consequent abolition of all distinction in matters of revenue. . . . I had a very long conversation with Lord Downshire, who is full of alarm from the consequence of pressing the measure. I urged to him every degree of argument and persuasion that I thought most likely to weigh with him; but I cannot be sure that I succeeded in anything but convincing him that, in all events, the Union will be persisted in. I endeavoured in vain to obtain a positive assurance from him that he would go himself immediately, or write to his friends to support, but could not bring him to a point, and he left me apparently undecided and embarrassed."—MR PITT *to* LORD CASTLEREAGH, *January* 17, 1799; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, ii. 116.

† "GEORGE R.—His Majesty is persuaded that the unremitting industry with which our enemies persevere in their avowed design of separating Ireland from this country cannot fail to engage the particular attention of Parliament; and his Majesty recommends it to the House to consider of the most effectual means of finally defeating this design by disposing the Parliament of both kingdoms to proceed in the manner which they shall judge most expedient for settling such a complete and final adjustment as may best tend to improve and perpetuate a connection essential for their common security, and for consolidating the strength, power, and resources of the British empire."—HANSARD'S *Parliamentary History*, *January* 22, 1798.

CHAP. I.

1799.

83. The Union is rejected by the Irish Parliament.

But it was not here that the real difficulty lay. It is seldom that the greater power makes any objection to absorbing the lesser; the difficulty is to get the lesser to consent to its absorption by the greater. The ferment continued to increase in many parts of the kingdom. It had been deemed necessary to bring in a bill authorising the Lord-Lieutenant to suspend the *Habeas Corpus* Act, and proclaim martial law in disturbed districts; and this was actually done in Antrim by General Nugent, and in Mayo by the Lord-Lieutenant. The Irish Parliament met on the 22d January, and in consequence of the mention of the Union in the King's speech, a most animated debate ensued on the subject. It began at four P.M., and lasted twenty-one hours, not being closed till one on the following day—when the address as a whole was carried by a majority of ONE, the numbers being 106 to 105.* Great hopes were entertained by the Government that this majority, how slender soever, would decide the question; but they were not of long duration. Two nights afterwards, on January 24, in committee on the address, Sir Lawrence Parsons moved the omission of the paragraph relating to and approving of the Union; and after another long debate, the motion was carried by a majority of five, the numbers being 109 to 104. Immense was the excitement produced, and the rejoicings held on this, as it was deemed at the time, decisive victory. Dublin was thrice illuminated: the blaze of bonfires was seen far and wide on

* It is a most singular circumstance how many great questions in modern history have been carried in the first instance by a majority of one only, and that slender majority, though often afterwards overcome, has generally proved ominous of the ultimate result. The Irish Union, as seen above, was carried by a majority of one, and ultimately proved successful. The Revolution of France in 1789 was carried by a majority of one on June 10, 1789—the numbers being 247 to 246. The Reform Bill, on its first introduction, was carried by a majority of one, the numbers being 301 to 300, on March 1, 1830. Sir Robert Peel displaced Lord Melbourne and introduced the free-trade system on June 4, 1841, by a majority of one—the numbers 315 to 314, the largest division on record in Parliamentary History.—*See Histoire Parlementaire de la France*, i. 430; *Ann. Reg.* 1831, 27.

the mountains in the country. In the House of Peers there was a majority, though not a large one, in favour of the Union; but as this had been anticipated, it was far from counterbalancing the defeat in the Commons. Still, as the Commons on the first division had decided by the smallest majority in favour of the Union, and the Lords were in its favour, there was some ground for asserting that, upon the whole, the measure had made some progress. The ability with which Lord Castlereagh conducted this debate, and the mingled firmness and suavity of his manner, attracted universal notice, and called forth the warmest expressions of satisfaction both from the Lord-Lieutenant and the British Government.[1]*

[1] Castlereagh Corresp. ii. 73, 74.

84. Effect of this defeat on Mr Pitt, Lord Cornwallis, and Lord Castlereagh.

Lord Castlereagh, who was only beginning political life, and had not yet learned, as he afterwards did, the great number of "waverers" and waiters on Providence on any serious crisis in which the result is uncertain, had anticipated a very different result, and transmitted a few days afterwards to the Duke of Portland a very curious

* "My dear Lord,—The conduct you have observed respecting the Union, in the two extraordinary debates you have had to sustain, has been so perfectly judicious, and so exactly what could have been wished, that I should do the rest of the King's servants, as well as myself, great injustice, was I to defer our fullest assurances of the satisfaction it has given us, and of the important advantages we anticipate—I should say, with more propriety, which have been derived—from the temper, the firmness, and the spirit you displayed on both these important and most trying occasions; for I must attribute to them the happy termination of the business on Thursday and the defeat and total rout of Mr George Ponsonby's motion—an event which, if improved, as I have no doubt it will be, I look to as being capable of affording greater facility and security to the completion of the Union, than if the address had been carried by no greater majority than we had latterly reason to expect."—Duke of Portland *to* Lord Castlereagh, *January* 29, 1799; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, ii. 145.

"I cannot omit to observe that the whole of Lord Castlereagh's conduct throughout the course of the proceeding has been so judicious and correct, that it is the decided opinion of the King's servants that the line he has hitherto observed cannot be too strictly adhered to."—Duke of Portland *to* Lord Cornwallis, *February* 3, 1799; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, ii. 155.

"I cannot describe to you the pleasure I feel at finding that all your exertions have been justly appreciated here, and that you stand as high as possible in the esteem and confidence both of the Ministers and of the public."—Mr Elliot *to* Lord Castlereagh, *Burlington House, February* 4, 1799; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, ii. 161.

20074

CHAP. I. 1799.

analysis of the vote, showing in what way he had been so much disappointed.* The different characters of the leaders on this great question were strongly evinced by the way in which they took their first serious defeat. Marquess Cornwallis, who, with many great and good qualities, was not equal to his colleagues in the Government in political firmness, was in despair at the result, and almost abandoned all hope of ever being able, under any circumstances, to effect the deliverance of the country.† Mr Pitt and Lord Castlereagh, on the other hand, regarded it only as a temporary check, the result of an extraordinary combination of private interests, such as might never arise again; and, so far from desponding, were only the more confirmed in their resolution to persevere in bringing it forward till it ultimately proved successful.‡

The conduct of Government did not belie their firm

* Voted with Government on the address or reports,	113
Friends absent,	39
Voted against, who had promised to vote for,	22
Voted against, or absent,	129
Of whom may be bought off,	20
Vacancies,	7

† "The late experiment has shown the impossibility of carrying a measure which is contrary to the private interests of those who are to decide upon it, and which is not supported by the voice of the country at large; and I think it is evident that, if ever a second trial of the Union is to be made, the Catholics must be included." — MARQUESS CORNWALLIS *to* DUKE OF PORTLAND, *January* 26, 1799; *Cornwallis Correspondence*, iii. 52.

"For myself I see no hope of deliverance, but feel that I am doomed to waste the remainder of my life, and sacrifice the little reputation which the too partial opinion of the world had allowed me, in this wretched country, where nothing can prosper."—LORD CORNWALLIS *to* GENERAL ROSS, *January* 28, 1799; *Ibid.*, iii. 56.

‡ "We have failed for the present, and yet I am persuaded, setting aside the question of private interest, which is strong against us, a material progress has been made in establishing the measure. Considering the many classes of selfish politicians that were against us, our strength, notwithstanding the degree to which we were betrayed by some avowed friends and abandoned by others, was considerable, and our party sensibly brought up in tone on the second day. Though we lost the question by a few votes, I am persuaded firmness will carry the measure, and that within a reasonable time. The opposition is more of a private than a public nature, though the local clamour of Dublin gives it a popular aspect."—LORD CASTLEREAGH *to the* HONOURABLE SYLVESTER DOUGLAS, *February* 4, 1799; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, ii. 160. Mr Pitt wrote at the same time to Lord Cornwallis: "I am certainly much disappointed and grieved to find that a measure so essential is frustrated for the

determination. It was *after* having received intelligence of the defeat in Dublin that Mr Pitt brought forward the resolutions already mentioned, pledging the British Government to proceed. Their measures in Ireland were not less decided. On January 26, the Duke of Portland wrote to Lord Cornwallis, again expressing the unaltered determination of Government to go on with the measure, and empowering him to dismiss any person, how elevated soever in office, who had been instrumental in opposing it.* He added, after enumerating several noblemen, in particular the Marquess of Ely, whose conduct could not be overlooked—"You will take care that it be understood that the measure neither is nor never will be abandoned, and that the support of it will be considered as a necessary and indispensable test of the attachment on the part of the Irish to their connection with this country."[1]

85. The English Government resolves to persevere.

[1] Cornwallis Corresp. iii. 47.

This rude defeat, however, while it in no degree lessened Lord Castlereagh's confidence in the ultimate success of the cause, rendered him more than ever alive to the absolute necessity of separating altogether the question of the Union from that of Catholic emancipation, and pushing the former through by the whole weight of Government before the latter was brought forward. Clogged with concession to the Catholics, it was evident the Union would never pass the Irish Parliament; or if it did, it would, in the present temper of men's minds, lead to a *union with France*, not Great Britain. Accord-

86. The rejection of the Union strengthens Lord Castlereagh's views against immediate emancipation.

time by the effect of prejudice and cabal; but I have no doubt that a steady and temperate perseverance on our part will, at no distant period, produce a more just sense of what the real interest of every man who has a stake in the country requires, at least as much as his duty to Ireland and the empire at large. You will, I hope, approve our own determination to proceed here on Thursday, in opening the resolutions stating the general outline and principles of the plan."—MR PITT *to* LORD CORNWALLIS, *January* 26, 1799; *Cornwallis Correspondence*, iii. 57.

* "I cannot too strongly impress upon your Excellency's mind the determination of his Majesty's Ministers to propose this measure without delay to the Parliaments of both kingdoms, and to support it with all the weight and energy of Government."—DUKE OF PORTLAND *to* LORD CORNWALLIS, *January* 17, 1799; *Cornwallis Correspondence*, iii. 47.

CHAP. I.

1799.

ingly, on 28th January, he wrote to the Duke of Portland: "It is plain that upon a mere principle of pursuing power, ambition, and revenge, it is the interest of the Catholics to obtain political equality without a union; for as the general democratic power of the State is increasing daily by the general wealth and prosperity, and as the Catholics form the greater part of the democracy, their power must proportionably increase whilst the kingdoms are separate and the Irish oligarchy is stationary or declining. The Catholics, therefore, if offered equality without a union, will probably prefer it to equality with a union; for, in the latter case, they must ever be content with inferiority—in the former, they would probably by degrees obtain ascendancy. In addition to the usual supporters of emancipation, many of the anti-Union party will now take up the Catholic cause, the better to defeat the question of Union. Were the Catholic question to be now carried, the great argument for a union would be lost, at least as far as the Catholics are concerned. It seems therefore, more important than ever for Government to resist its adoption, on the grounds that without a union it must be destructive; with it, that it may be safe. I am of opinion that the measure hereafter, to insure its success, must be proposed on a more enlarged principle; but if the immediate object of Government is to resist the Catholic claims, rather than to renew the question of Union, I must doubt the policy of at present holding out to them any decided expectations. It might weaken us with the Protestants, and would not strengthen us with the Catholics, whilst they look to carry their question unconnected with Union. . . . I should despair of the success of the measure at any future period, so weighty is the opposition of the country gentlemen in our House, were I not convinced that their repugnance turns more upon points of personal interest than a fixed aversion to the principle of union." [1] *

[1] Castlereagh Corresp. ii. 140-143.

* This letter of Lord Castlereagh is very remarkable. It distinctly shows, and on irrefragable grounds, the necessity of postponing the question of eman-

Although the question of Union could not be competently brought forward in the Irish House of Commons a second time in the same session of Parliament, yet it was incidentally mentioned, and fiercely debated, on many collateral points, on all of which occasions Lord Castlereagh proclaimed with unflinching firmness the determination of Government to go on with the measure, and bring it forward again and again till it was finally carried. He did this particularly with great effect on the 13th April, on occasion of a debate on a matter connected with the excise, and a report on the Regency Bill. On this occasion his lordship moved and carried, after an animated debate, the adjournment of further proceedings on the subject till the 1st August. This was a great point gained, and it gave time for more extended discussion, the application of Government influence to the leading members of the Opposition, and the calming of the passions so violently roused by the first introduction of the measure. The remainder of the year was occupied in unremitting exertions on the part of the Government to overcome or neutralise local opposition, and insure a successful result when the proposal should be brought forward in the next session of Parliament. Among other steps taken to accomplish this object, was a tour by the Lord-Lieutenant and the Viceregal Court to the north of Ireland, which afforded opportunities both for the presenting of petitions from several boroughs and a few counties in favour of the measure, and private conferences, of a still more *interesting* kind, with several of the leading noblemen and landholders who had hitherto been instrumental in opposing it.[1] These latter were occupied, however, almostly entirely, not as the vulgar supposed, in the actual proffer of bribes, but the more delicate, though still more effectual promise of titles, or steps in

87. He continues to assist the determination of Government on the subject.

[1] Castlereagh Corresp. ii. 74, 75.

cipation till that of union was settled, and prognosticates the circumstances which might hereafter convulse the nation by the efforts of the Catholics to acquire unrestrained dominion in a separate Parliament, as was done by O'Connell and the cry for a repeal of the Union forty years afterwards..

CHAP. I. 1799.

the peerage to those already enjoying such honours. The long list of promotion to the peerage which followed the passing of the Union, proved at once how far this refined species of seduction had been adopted, and how generally it had proved successful.

88. Efforts of the Opposition during the recess.

It well behoved the Government to make these efforts to facilitate the passing of this measure, for the Opposition were indefatigable in their endeavours in every imaginable way to thwart it. During the recess of Parliament several different plans were taken into consideration in order to accomplish this object. That first adopted was, to raise a large sum to purchase seats in the House for persons who should oppose the Union ; and it was stated that £100,000 had been subscribed for in this way, including £1000 from Lord Downshire, and £500 from each of the Ponsonbys. The money, however, was never called up, or, if paid, returned, probably as there was no prospect of a dissolution to bring it into play. The next was, to employ a number of able men to write it down in the public press and elsewhere ; and this, which was certainly a most legitimate species of warfare, was practised with considerable success. The third was of a more exceptionable character, and was so extraordinary, that it would be incredible if not attested by the authority of the biographer of one of the leading opponents of the Union. It was for every man to select his antagonist, and challenge him ; which was justified on the allegation that this had been the determination adopted at a meeting of the friends of Government at the Castle![1]* Happily this

[1] Castlereagh Corresp. ii. 76.

* "The Opposition contemplated a third plan, which would have been merely acting on the principle laid down at the Castle. . . . A meeting of the friends of Government had been convened, and the persons who were to support the several articles of the Union were brought forward. Several members spoke on this occasion, and among them was Mr F. George Daly; he was one of the boldest, particularly active, and quite decided. He declared (these were his words) that his line had been taken ; that each of them must select his antagonist, *and that he had chosen his antagonist already.*"—*Life of Grattan*, by his son HENRY GRATTAN, M.P., i. 73, 74. It is scarcely possible to believe that such a system was either proposed by the one party or held up for imitation by the other ; but the fact of such a story being current, and stated on respectable authority, shows the excitement of the public mind at the time.

sanguinary system of tactics was never carried out on either side, if it had been ever seriously proposed; though some painful personal encounters took place in consequence of intemperate words spoken in the heat of debate.

89. Renewed preparations of French for invading Ireland.

The Irish Government, however, was threatened, during the summer and autumn of 1799, with a more serious warfare than an exchange of shots with the Opposition members in Parliament. The French Directory, awakened when it was too late to the importance of aiming a serious blow at Great Britain through the vulnerable side of Ireland, was making active preparations in the harbours, both of Holland and of the Channel, for its invasion. The officers who had returned to France after having been made prisoners in the Killala expedition, spoke in the most contemptuous terms of the troops to which they had been opposed, and did not hesitate to affirm that, if they had landed with 6000 men instead of 1200, they would have taken the country and kept it. Certainly, if all the troops in Ireland, numerous as they were, had acted as the Irish militia regiments engaged actually did, there can be no doubt that their views were not unfounded.* During the whole summer of 1799, the French Government, pressed as they were with war in Switzerland and Italy, never ceased to make the utmost efforts to equip a maritime force, capable of conveying and defending on the passage a large body of troops; and

* "I should not be at all surprised if the French should make an attempt to throw some forces into Ireland, if it were only in the hope of increasing the disorder which they may naturally suppose must exist during the agitation of the question of the Union. I know, besides, notwithstanding the language that some of them might hold in Ireland, that most of the officers who had returned to France, prisoners from the expedition under General Hardy, entertain a very mean opinion of the troops to which they were opposed, and are impressed with the idea, which they will not fail to inculcate at the Luxembourg, that had they landed 6000 men instead of 1200, they should have secured the country. The vanity natural to Frenchmen makes them persuaded of the truth of what they say; and I have reason to know the officers who passed through this town on their way to Dover, one and all, maintained that, had the second expedition effected its landing, the island could have been their own."—MR WICKHAM *to* LORD CASTLEREAGH, *January* 11, 1799; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, ii. 93.

CHAP. I. 1799.

though different places were assigned by public rumour for the destination of these armaments, yet it was well known to Government, from secret information, that the real one was Ireland. Notwithstanding the disaster at Camperdown, eight sail of the line and five frigates were ready for sea at the Texel; and at Brest there were seventeen line-of-battle ships, six frigates, six corvettes, and twenty-seven transports armed *en flute*. Great numbers of smaller craft were in preparation or ready for sea in Dunkirk, Calais, Boulogne, Cherbourg, Rochefort, and other harbours along the French coast; and it was evident that the design was to collect the whole transports and smaller craft in Dunkirk and Boulogne, to be conducted under convoy of the Texel fleet to Brest, from whence, with the united navies of France and Holland, a descent on the south or west coast of Ireland was to be attempted.*

90. Disturbed and alarming state of the island. Feb. 1799.

What rendered the preparations of the French Government the more formidable was, the distracted and alienated state of men's minds in almost the whole of the country, in consequence of the suppression of the rebellion and the Union agitation. The first had made lasting enemies of

* "Tous les petits bâtimens de guerre qu'on a rassemblé à Dunkerque n'étoient que pour les retirer des autres ports, d'où on fait enlever tous les marins et conduire à Brest, escortés par la force armée. On fait également enlever à tous les ports tous les agrès et autres utensiles nécessaires à l'armement, qu'on fait transporter aussi à Brest. On a également enlevé tous les agrès des quatre frégates qui sont à Dunkerque, pour les faire suivre la même destination, et tous le transport se fait par terre, de manière qu'aujourd'hui tout paroît se diriger vers ce port, où il y a environ dix gros vaisseaux armés ou prêts à l'être, ainsi que plusieurs frégates, et tout conspire à faire croire qu'il va y avoir une expédition pour Ireland."—*Secret Information from France, January* 28, 1799; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, ii. 167.

"*Brest, February* 2.—Orders are received to send a division to Rochefort, where it is to be joined by the ships and frigates from L'Orient," consisting of three sail of the line and five frigates. Each of the line-of-battle ships has 700 sailors on board, besides soldiers: they are equipped for four months.

Brest, February 7.—Two more line-of-battle ships, the Cisalpin and Berwick, have joined the Rochefort squadron. "Other ships are getting ready daily, and extraordinary exertions are making to equip them *with as little éclat as possible;* as it is apprehended they are intended to be stolen out successively as they are armed, to rally at some other port of which the egress may be more easy. . . . At Brest seventeen line-of-battle ships, six large frigates, and six corvettes, with twenty-seven transports *en flute*."—*Secret Information; Castlereagh Papers*, ii. 165-167.

the Revolutionists and Catholics, the last had alienated the Orangemen and Protestants. Lord Cornwallis's humane and generous policy of forgiveness and conciliation had by no means produced the result he expected from it. Men's minds were too much excited to be calmed down by anything but fear. Nothing short of the entire destruction of their opponents would satisfy either of the parties, whose hostility distracted the country. On the 14th February Lord Cornwallis wrote to the Duke of Portland: "It is with much pain I am to acquaint your lordship that the lenient measures adopted by the Legislature, at the instance of his Majesty, towards the close of the last session, have not been productive of those good effects in recalling the people to a sense of their allegiance which was due to, and might have been expected from, so merciful an interposition in their favour. The same spirit of disaffection continues to pervade the lower orders; and though the rebellion is less openly persisted in, it does not fail to show itself in various outrages and depredations, not less destructive, and infinitely more embarrassing, than open insurrection. The province of Ulster is, upon the whole, more exempt from disturbance than any other portion of the kingdom; but even in this quarter the disaffected are not inactive; and in the county of Antrim during the last month, the houses of several loyal persons have been by night entered and stripped of arms. In the other provinces the treasonable disposition exists in its full force, and a general insecurity prevails. . . . In the west the old system of houghing cattle has been of late revived, and carried to an extent which threatens the most serious consequences, not only to this kingdom, but to the empire." On the 13th February he wrote to General Ross: "The whole of the south is prepared to rise at the moment that a French soldier sets his foot on shore; and the people in Connaught are houghing all the cattle and sheep, for what purpose God knows, except to ruin all the men of property, and destroy the supplies for our

CHAP. I. 1799.

navy and colonies. How far a militia composed of these very men, and, in spite of all my objections, almost entirely dispersed in the cabins of the country, can be depended upon to fight the battles of Great Britain, it is not difficult to determine. The patriotic Irish gentlemen, who are so enraged at the insolent interference of England in the management of their affairs, if ever they dare to go to their country-houses, barricade their ground-floor, and beg for a garrison of English militia or Scotch fencibles. That the French will persevere in their attempts to invade Ireland there can be no doubt; and if they should succeed, which God forbid, in establishing a war in this country, I shall be most happy to have you with me, and shall take immediate steps to effect it."[1]

[1] Castlereagh Corresp. ii. 175; Cornwallis Corresp. iii. 60.

91. Military force in Ireland at this time.

While this was the state, verging on open rebellion, of the revolutionary party, and the great bulk of the peasantry in the south and west of Ireland, the force which the Government had to meet it was seriously weakened. Numerically speaking, indeed, the military force in the country was very considerable; it amounted, on paper, to 42,000 infantry and 7000 cavalry; but of this large force only 15,000 were English regiments of the line. The remainder consisted of English and Scotch militia and fencibles, and Irish militia and yeomanry. The British militia were entirely to be trusted, and had rendered the very best service, both by their conduct in the field, and their orderly conduct in quarters; but the regiments were all worn out by the harassing duties to which they had been subjected in that distracted country, and were perpetually applying to be sent home; and as the period for which they had volunteered their services beyond the Channel had in almost every instance expired, it was no easy matter to know how their demands were to be refused. Generally, it was only by the personal influence and solicitation of their commanding officers that they were prevailed on to stay. As to the Irish militia, they were so ill-disciplined and irregular in their habits,

that they could not be relied on for any military operation; and their conduct at Castlebar had proved that, in many regiments at least, their fidelity to the Government was by no means to be trusted to, and that in the event of any considerable body of French effecting a landing, they would, in all probability, range themselves by their side. As to the yeomanry, all that could be expected from it was to keep the country quiet in the rear of the regular troops.* Even this was by no means an easy duty; for Government had certain information that there were 20,000 men prepared to rise at a moment's notice in the neighbourhood of Cork; and that, in the event of an invasion from even a small body of French, a general insurrection in the whole south and west would at once ensue.† Lord Cornwallis justly described the state of Ireland on 24th July, when he stated that the forces remaining in Ireland, exclusive of artillery, amounted to 45,419; "a force sufficient to preserve the peace—totally inadequate to repel foreign invasion."[1]

[1] Cornwallis Corresp. iii. 117, 118.

Serious as these dangers were, they were much aggra-

* "It is most earnestly to be wished that you may succeed with the Scotch fencibles, as the precarious tenure on which we hold the English militia makes me very uneasy. The Leicestershire regiments (Duke of Rutland's), which, three months ago, so handsomely agreed to stay without any limitation of time, have now desired to return to England, and have with difficulty been prevailed upon to remain here till the 1st of June. The Irish militia, besides their total want of all idea of discipline and subordination, from their being dispersed in small detachments over the whole face of the country, without officers or non-commissioned officers who are capable of taking any care of them, are certainly not to be depended upon, even in point of fidelity, in the event of a serious invasion of this country; and all that can be expected from the yeomanry is, that they will for a time, if no material disaster happens, keep the country from rising behind us."—LORD CORNWALLIS *to* HENRY DUNDAS, *March* 14, 1799; *Cornwallis Correspondence*, iii. 76.

† There are 20,000 rebels organised at Cork and its neighbourhood, and they are determined to make a rising on the evening of Easter Sunday next, when they expect the French. A feint is to be made at Killala, but the principal attack is to be made about Cork. The whole country is organising with more activity than ever; and great numbers of the militia soldiers are sworn already to join them. The militia are not to be trusted, and a sharp eye should be kept on them. The country is preparing for rebellion more strongly than ever, and in greater numbers. They expect the Dutch, and particularly the Spaniards, to come to their assistance. There is not a Catholic who would not kill a Protestant as soon as he would a rat.—*Information of Joseph Holt, one of the leaders of the insurgents; Castlereagh Correspondence*, ii. 186.

CHAP. I.

1799.

vated by the new and alarming cause of discord which had arisen from the agitation of the Union question. This had not only alienated a large section of that portion of the community which had hitherto supported Government, but it had gone far to shake the loyalty of the militia regiments best affected to the Crown. The Merchant Guild of Dublin, an ultra-Protestant incorporation, issued an address, calling on all classes and sects to unite against the measure, and returning their warmest thanks to their "Roman Catholic fellow-citizens in Dublin" for their manly and patriotic conduct. Petitions were got up from the freeholders in thirty-eight counties against the measure, in pursuance of a circular signed by Lords Downshire and Charlemont, and Mr Ponsonby. A union of parties was strongly recommended, and in a great measure accomplished. Many persons wore, especially in Westmeath, *orange and green* cockades, to indicate that a junction of the most opposite parties was preferable to a union with the sister kingdom. A universal ferment prevailed, and Lord Cornwallis was desponding in the extreme as to the ultimate issue of the contest.[1] *

92. Increasing difficulties with the militia and yeomanry.

[1] Cornwallis Corresp. iii. 170, 171.

93. Lord-Lieutenant's favourable journey in the north.

The cause of the Union gained considerably by the Lord-Lieutenant's journey to the northern counties in the autumn of 1799. The commercial cities and towns there had become fully sensible of the importance of the change to their interests, and vied with each other in demonstration of interest in it. "At Antrim," says Lord Cornwallis, "Coleraine, Newtown Limavady, and all the places through which I passed, addresses were presented, and the words '*principal inhabitants*' were always inserted, as well as the *Corporation*. At Londonderry my recep-

* "The indefatigable exertions, aided by the subscriptions, of the anti-Unionists, have raised a powerful clamour against the measure in many parts of the kingdom, and have put the capital quite in an uproar; and I am sorry to say, some of our unwilling supporters in Parliament have taken advantage of these appearances to decline giving any further support. God only knows how the business will terminate; but it is so hard to struggle against private interests, and the pride and prejudices of a nation, that I shall never feel confident of success till the Union is actually carried."—LORD CORNWALLIS *to* GENERAL ROSS, *February* 4, 1800; *Cornwallis Correspondence*, iii. 177.

tion was cordial and flattering beyond expression. The county as well as the city addressed; the town was universally illuminated, and 'success to the Union' resounded from every quarter. From thence I made an excursion to Strabane and Lifford, where the corporations and *principal inhabitants* expressed the most decided sentiments in favour of the Union."[1] In a word, it was evident from this tour, that the cause of the Union had made very great progress among the mercantile and middle classes in most of the towns, who were fully alive to the commercial advantages which it promised to extend to the country. But that by no means lessened—on the contrary, it greatly increased—the intense hatred with which it was regarded in Dublin and by the Protestant magnates, who, in return for their support to Government, had hitherto enjoyed the whole local patronage in their respective districts; for it portended the rise of an influence in the community which would probably prove fatal to that which they had so long enjoyed.*

[1] Lord Cornwallis to Duke of Portland, Oct. 22, 1799; Cornwallis Corresp. iii. 139, 140.

94. Naval preparations of the French for the invasion of Ireland.

The efforts of both parties for and against the Union were on the point of being cut short by a descent of the French on the coast of Ireland, for which various preparations had been made by the Directory both at Paris and the Hague. The plan adhered to was a union of the fleets in all the harbours of Holland and the Channel, which, it was hoped, might be effected during the mists and long nights of autumn or winter; and arrangements were in progress for collecting a force of thirty-five sail of the line, and eighteen frigates, to cover the passage to Ireland. Eight sail of the line, two of 56 guns each, and five frigates, were in readiness at the Texel; four

* "It will be considered that we have [against us in Parliament] a minority consisting of 120 members well combined and united, that many of them are men of the first weight and talent in the House, that 37 of them are members for counties, that great endeavours have been used to inflame the kingdom, that petitions from twenty-six counties have been procured, that the city of Dublin is almost unanimous against it; and with such an opposition so circumstanced and supported, it is evident much management must be used, and that Government must avoid putting itself in the wrong."—LORD CASTLEREAGH *to* JOHN KING, ESQ., *March* 7, 1800; *Cornwallis Correspondence*, iii. 206.

CHAP. I. 1799.

more were getting ready at Rotterdam, and five at Amsterdam; there were fourteen ready at Brest, three at Rochefort, and two at Cherbourg.* Several attempts to get across by detached vessels or small light squadrons were defeated by the ceaseless vigilance of Sir John Borlase Warren and Sir Edward Pellew, who commanded the British naval armaments, to whose care the defence of the Channel and its coasts was intrusted. But their efforts, how great and meritorious soever, effected and could effect nothing decisive: the fleets at the Texel and in the Dutch ports remained untouched—a standing menace to Ireland and the southern coasts of Britain. At length, however, an effectual remedy was applied to this evil, and security afforded to the British Isles, by the consequences of an event, the importance of which has only now come, from the publication of the official correspondence of the period, to be duly appreciated. This event was the expedition under the Duke of York to the Helder in 27th August 1799. Though that expedition failed in effecting the ostensible and principal object for which it was intended, that of extricating Holland from the French yoke, it yet successfully achieved a secondary one of still greater importance with reference to the independence and security of the British Islands. The expedition landed at the Helder in North Holland after a sharp conflict, in which the British lost 500 men, on the 27th August. By this success the British troops were brought into the rear of the Texel, which is scarcely defended on the land side, and became masters of the fleet there, consisting of eight ships of the line, three of 56 guns, eight of 44, and six of 32 guns.[1] This powerful

Aug. 27.

[1] Dumas, i. 369-372; Ann. Reg. 1799, 363; Jomini, xii. 189; Castlereagh Corresp. ii. 200-207.

* "Les Français, après bien des instances, ont obtenu du Directoire Batave de faire sortir d'Hollande six vaisseaux de ligne, deux frégates, ainsi que deux barques canonières, pour faire, à ce qu'on assure, une descente en Irelande. On croit qu'ils se joindront à quelque flotte de Brest ou de Rochefort. . . . A Amsterdam on répare le Vischer, ou Vanguerde, 76, qui portera 80 canons, et un autre du même grandeur, ainsi qu'un autre de 68 vient d'être mouillé; un second de 68 en réparation, avec les Etats-Généraux de 64. A Rotterdam deux de 74 en construction, et deux de 64 en réparation."—*Secret Information, January 7 and* 12, 1799; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, ii. 200, 201.

armament was conveyed in safety to the British harbours, and from that moment all thoughts of a descent in force on Ireland were laid aside by the French Government, and the war in the Channel was confined to contests of frigates or small vessels, in which the superior skill and prowess of the British sailors almost uniformly gave them the advantage. CHAP. I. 1799.

95. Changes in the project of Union at the instance of Lord Castlereagh.

Before the project of a union was again brought forward by Government in the Irish Parliament, it underwent several modifications, on the suggestion of Lord Castlereagh, calculated to render it more acceptable to the opponents of the measure in Ireland. These alterations consisted chiefly of details regarding the adjustment of the public debt of the two countries respectively, and the very delicate matter of admitting the Roman Catholic peers, who were only six in number, to vote for the representative peers in the British Parliament. These changes were the subject of a long correspondence between the English Government and Lords Cornwallis and Castlereagh, by whom the liberal side in all these questions was warmly supported. By their temper and conciliatory measures the objections of most of the supporters of this measure were removed; and the Catholics, as a body, satisfied with the disposition of Government, were content to remain neutral, or give it a lukewarm support, without any distinct pledge in words as to future removal of the disabilities under which they laboured being given by the English Government. Lord Castlereagh expressed himself as full of hope that these alterations would insure the success of the measure when next brought forward in Parliament. Lord Cornwallis was by no means equally sanguine, and seemed extremely doubtful whether anything could overcome the repugnance of the ruling Protestant interests in the country to a measure so likely to prove fatal to their long-established oligarchical domination in the island.[1] *

[1] Lord Cornwallis to Duke of Portland, Dec. 9, 1799; Cornwallis Corresp. iii. 148, 149.

* "Your Grace and Mr Pitt will, I trust, both have an opportunity of satisfying Lord Clare's feelings in respect to the line hereafter to be pursued

CHAP. I.

1800.

96. The measure is carried in the Irish House.

At length the eventful day, big with the future destinies of the British empire, and for which both parties had made the utmost efforts, arrived. The Articles of Union had been most carefully gone over between Lord Castlereagh and Mr Pitt, and the former had the satisfaction of informing the latter, immediately before they were brought forward, that, as amended, they had obtained the cordial concurrence of the leading friends of the measure in Ireland.* The task now devolved on Lord Castlereagh of introducing the measure to the House, and it was one of such serious difficulty and responsibility, that his position excited grave apprehensions in the breasts of his friends. "I pity from my soul," said one of them, "Lord Castlereagh; he has a phalanx of mischievous talent, and a

towards the Catholics before he leaves London. Of course no further hopes will be held forth to that body by the Irish Government without specific directions from your Grace; and I fairly confess I entertain very great doubts whether any more distinct explanation than has already been given, would at present be politically advantageous. It is enough to feel assured that we are not suffering them to form expectations which must afterwards be disappointed, under the disadvantage of having dexterity, if not duplicity, imputed to Government in the conduct of the measure. The more I consider the terms of union you are prepared to offer to Ireland, the more confident I feel that the measure must ultimately succeed. I shall have a strong case to state to the Irish Parliament; I wish I could appeal to an audience solely intent upon the *public question*."—LORD CASTLEREAGH *to the* DUKE OF PORTLAND, *November* 28, 1799; *Cornwallis Correspondence*, iii. 147.

Lord Cornwallis was by no means equally sanguine. "It is a sad thing to be forced," said he, "to manage knaves, but it is ten times worse to deal with fools. Between the one and the other, I entertain every day more doubt of our success in the great question of Union. We have a lukewarm, and, in some instances, an unwilling majority; the enemy have a bold and deeply interested minority, which will, I am afraid, even after our friends are reckoned, run us much nearer than most people expect." — LORD CORNWALLIS *to* GENERAL ROSS, *December* 28, 1799; *Cornwallis Correspondence*, iii. 153.

"I do not feel very bold: every day produces some symptoms of defection, and I hope our friends in England will be prepared for the worst."—LORD CORNWALLIS *to* GENERAL ROSS, *December* 24, 1799; *Ibid.*, iii. 152.

* "The Articles of Union having now been gone through by our leading friends, I can venture to assure you that the arrangement affords them all the fullest satisfaction. The question of expense they consider as most satisfactorily and liberally settled between the two countries, and the only alteration they seem to wish is the introduction of some words in the clause which I have the honour to enclose, which may more distinctly explain, on the face of the resolution, the particular circumstances which would warrant the substitution of common taxes in lieu of proportionate contributions." — LORD CASTLEREAGH *to* MR PITT, *January* 13, 1800; *Cornwallis Correspondence*, iii. 159.

host of passion, folly, corruption, and enthusiasm, to contend with. The Catholics yesterday came to some absurd resolutions. Grattan has, you know, the confidence of 40,000 pikemen: he is to be introduced to the House to-night. The passions of the bar and many of the country gentry give them a favourable *accolade*."[1] Great prices were given by the Opposition for seats: Mr Grattan gave £2400 for his; and as much as £5000 was freely offered. Dublin was in the most violent state of agitation, and though it was known Government would have a majority, yet as it was in part made up of unwilling supporters, it was very doubtful whether, though at first carried, the measure might not be ultimately defeated, as it had been on the former occasion. Lord Castlereagh moved the address in a most manly speech, and Sir L. Parsons proposed an amendment, to the effect that the House declined the Union. The debate lasted eighteen hours, and was conducted with great ability by Mr Plunkett, Mr Grattan, Mr Bushe, Mr Ponsonby, and many others on the part of the Opposition. The result, however, though not so favourable as Lord Castlereagh had anticipated, gave a decided victory to Government; the amendment was rejected by a majority of 42, the numbers being 138 to 96.[2]

[1] H. Alexander, Esq., to Mr Pelham, Jan. 15, 1800; Cornwallis Corresp. iii. 161.

[2] Lord Cornwallis to Duke of Portland, Jan. 16, 1800; Cornwallis Corresp. iii. 160-164.

97. Treasonable efforts of the Opposition, and dismissal of Lord Downshire, Jan. 27.

This division was decisive of the question; the more especially as eighteen seats which required to be filled up for the most part returned Government supporters. The Opposition went great lengths on this defeat, calling on the counties to come forward and save the country; but no serious disturbance took place. The efforts made by the Opposition were such, however, as to intimidate not a few of the Government supporters, and excite some alarm for the final success of the measure in the breast of Lord Castlereagh himself. Every species of intimidation was resorted to—political, moral, and personal—to check the majority, and petitions from twenty-six counties were presented against it. A treasonable handbill was thrown off and widely circulated, call-

CHAP. I.

1800.

ing on the yeomanry of Ireland to rise and save the country; and it was asked whether 60,000 Irishmen, with arms in their hands, would stand tamely by and see the constitution of their native land sacrificed. To such a length did the excitement go, that the Marquess of Downshire, not content with speaking on all occasions in the most vehement strain against the measure, and sending round a circular to the counties calling on them to petition against it, took steps to get a petition to the same effect signed in his *regiment of militia*. This imprudent step, tending as it did to the subversion of military discipline and the arraying of the armed force against the Government, was immediately and decidedly met by Lord Cornwallis. He at once deprived him of the command of the regiment, and he was soon after informed that his Majesty had no further occasion for his services as lord-lieutenant of the county of Down. This spirited act, which was entirely approved by the English Government, and was, as Lord Cornwallis justly observed, "entirely in unison with the Irish character," produced the very best effect; and, by showing both the firmness of Ministers and their confidence in the cause, powerfully contributed to ultimate success.[1] *

[1] Lord Cornwallis to Duke of Portland, Feb. 4, 1800; Cornwallis Corresp. iii. 178, 179.

98. Fresh difficulties in the way.

As the measure went on in both Houses of Parliament, the difficulties and the anxiety increased, and it became even doubtful whether it would ultimately pass. In the Lords, indeed, the majority of Government was very great on the first resolution in favour of the Union, being 75.

* Lord Downshire had transmitted to Carlow, where his regiment was quartered, the draft of a petition against the Union; and the writers of the letters transmitting it—Captain Boyd of the Down Militia and "Jeffry Foresight"—asserted that officers and privates, whether freeholders or not, even those who were under age, were indiscriminately called upon to sign it. The soldiers, as might be expected, were in many cases ignorant of the contents of the paper presented to them for signature. Some imagined it was a petition *in favour* of the Union, others that it was a request that the Union *should not be carried out of the country*. Lord Downshire asserted that the only object was to get such of the men as were freeholders to sign the county petition, and there seems no reason to doubt that this was his lordship's view. But even in that view the act was improper, and of bad example, and was rightly and at once met by Government."—See *Cornwallis Correspondence*, iii. 179.

to 26; but in the Commons things wore a different aspect for several weeks. Every resolution was made the subject of a separate debate and division; and the whole contest fell on Lord Castlereagh, who had singly to sustain the conflict with a phalanx of concentrated ability arrayed on the other side. The orators who then led the Opposition in the Irish Commons—Mr Grattan, Mr Plunkett, Mr Ponsonby, Mr Bushe—were the most eloquent that Ireland had ever produced, and they had the immense advantage of speaking to a willing sympathetic audience in the House, and in the presence of an excited and enthusiastic public in the country. Lord Castlereagh had no effective support in debate in the Lower House, and although he had a majority of votes, the hearts of the greater part of the members were on the other side. The ability, temper, and judgment with which he led the Ministerial party, and sustained the debate in those arduous circumstances, was above all praise, and called forth the applause even of his opponents.* Nor was one quality awanting which, important in all public crises, was especially so in Ireland at this time. His personal courage was undoubted; his moral intrepidity equal to any emergency. On one occasion, when Mr Grattan had said that "Lord Castlereagh's assertion, that the measure was agreeable to the sense of the people, was

May 26.

* "Lord Castlereagh entered into a full examination and refutation of the Speaker's argument on the former night, wherein he had endeavoured to show that if the Union had taken place before the war, this kingdom would have been more in debt by ten millions. His Lordship showed the fallacy of this statement with great force and perspicuity, and established to the satisfaction of the committee the positions he had laid down in his original speech."—LORD CORNWALLIS *to* DUKE OF PORTLAND, *February* 25, 1800; *Cornwallis Correspondence*, iii. 199.

"Mr Ponsonby was replied to by Lord Castlereagh with great and confessed ability. His Lordship entered fully into a detailed state of the public mind from the time the question was first moved. He showed that when the people were left to themselves there was a general disposition to acquiesce in the measure, and, among the loyal and well-informed classes, to approve it; and that the public expressions adverse to the measure had been brought about by manœuvre and artifice. Seventy-four declarations had been made in favour of a union by public bodies in the kingdom, of which nineteen were from freeholders of counties."—LORD CORNWALLIS *to* DUKE OF PORTLAND, *March* 5, 1800; *Ibid.*, 203.

CHAP. I. 1800.

contrary to known fact; and that the assertion that he was exciting the people to future treason and rebellion was a direct and manifest untruth, if the expression of prophetic treason was in the slightest degree imputed to what he had delivered;" "Lord Castlereagh rose with great coolness," says Lord Cornwallis, "in reply. He said that he never should enter into personal altercation in that House; that he despised that parade of parliamentary spirit which led to nothing, and which denied in offensive terms what had been never uttered; that if any personal incivility were used to him it was not in Parliament he should answer it, and that he should carefully avoid making himself an object for the interference of the House. Lord Castlereagh's reply gave very general satisfaction, and was considered as a signal proof of his ready judgment as well as of his abilities." "It raised him much in the estimation of the House, and the general feeling was that he had completely shaken off the attack upon his adversary. He felt, however, that all was not quite settled and explained as he could wish, and rather wanted to send Grattan a message, and his friends have with great difficulty dissuaded him. The fact is, that the whole House was completely satisfied: he rose in their opinion. There was no rumour that it was expected he should go further. We thought he would let himself down by doing so, and that it would be quitting the high ground on which he stood."[1]

[1] Lord Cornwallis to Duke of Portland and J. King, Esq., May 27, 1800; Cornwallis Corresp. iii. 240-242.

99. Increasing difficulties attending the measure, which is at length passed. June 7.

Notwithstanding all these efforts, however, it became a very doubtful matter whether the measure would be carried. The majority fell off in an alarming manner on several occasions; *twelve* of those who had voted with Government at first deserted them afterwards. Both parties made the utmost use of influence; but on the side of Ministers it consisted chiefly in the promises of offices, titles, and promotion, which were freely held out; on that of Opposition, in the actual bestowing of large bribes. £5000 was given for a single vote by them; the bargain was sometimes struck while the debate was

going on.* During all this protracted and arduous contest, which went on in the House and in committee for four months, Lord Castlereagh was constantly at his post. He was firmly supported by the Government in England, who declared their determination never to abandon the measure,† and by Lord Cornwallis, who, though by no means sanguine of success, acted with all the resolution of a British soldier in the discharge of what he often deemed a hopeless duty. At length their efforts and their perseverance were attended with the success which in a good cause seldom fails to crown the united efforts of talent and perseverance. After dragging for several months its weary way through the House of Commons, during which it was debated at every step, and every clause or resolution how minute soever was made the subject of a separate division, the Union Bill at length passed the Commons by a majority of 65, the numbers being 153 to 88.[1] In the Lords, to which it was immediately

[1] Marquess Cornwallis to Duke of Portland, June 7, 1800; Cornwallis Corresp. iii. 256.

* "We have undoubted proofs, though not such as we can disclose, that they are enabled to offer as high as £5000 for an individual vote; and I lament to state that there are individuals remaining amongst us that are likely to yield to this temptation. A not less formidable principle we have to contend against is the effect produced by their system of intimidation on the minds of our timid and lukewarm friends. The Opposition have shown their determination to rouse the disaffection of the country, and to hunt the people at the Government, and have not confined their efforts to the people alone: both yeomanry and militia are held forth to shake the constancy of our friends. Your Grace is fully apprised of the case of the Downshire regiment."—LORD CASTLEREAGH *to* DUKE OF PORTLAND, *February* 7, 1800; *Cornwallis Correspondence*, iii. 182.

"Our situation is critical: twelve of our supporters deserted to the enemy on the last division; one was bought during the debate. The enemy, to my certain knowledge, offer £5000 ready money for a vote. If we had the means and were disposed to make such vile use of them, we dare not trust the credit of Government in the hands of such rascals. How it will end, God only knows! I think there are not more than four or five of our people that can be either bought off or intimidated; but there is no answering for the courage or integrity of our senators."—LORD CORNWALLIS *to* BISHOP OF LICHFIELD, *February* 8, 1800; *Cornwallis Correspondence*, iii. 183, 184.

† "I authorise and instruct you to declare that no disappointment will ever induce his Majesty or his servants to recede from or to suspend their endeavours; but that it is his Majesty's fixed and unalterable determination to direct, session after session, the proposition of Union to be renewed to Parliament, until it is adopted by the good sense of the nation."—DUKE OF PORTLAND *to* LORD CORNWALLIS, *February* 12, 1800; *Cornwallis Correspondence*, iii. 191.

CHAP. I. 1800.

carried, the majority was still greater, being 69. At the termination of this great debate, it is consolatory to have the testimony of Lord Castlereagh to the fact that, with a few exceptions, the conduct of the whole supporters of Government had been in the highest degree energetic and honourable.[1]*

100. Its reception in Parliament and the country.

The crisis had passed before the measure was finally carried; and as the result had for some time been foreseen, it excited much less attention when it at length came to pass than had been anticipated. Every precaution was taken by Government against an outbreak in Dublin; but none such occurred. A conciliatory disposition, honourable to all parties, was evinced in the House when the measure had finally become law. Mr Dawson, member for the county of Monaghan, who had hitherto been an active opposer of the Union, rose in his place after it had passed, and declared in the fullest manner to the House that, as it had now received the approbation of Parliament and was to become the law of the land, he would not only think it his duty to pay obedience to it himself, but should exert himself to induce his constituents to reconcile themselves to its provisions. He was followed by Lord Maxwell, member for the county of Cavan, and some others, who severally expressed their determination to carry the Act of Union into execution to the utmost of their power. Lord Castlereagh, as well he might, did not fail to speak in the highest but not undeserved terms of eulogy of such noble and truly patriotic conduct on the part of his old political opponents.[1] So far did these feelings go, that they came to be shared in some degree even by the populace of Dublin, hitherto the most decided opponents

[1] Lord Cornwallis to Duke of Portland, June 9, 1800; Cornwallis Corresp. iii. 251; and to General Ross, Aug. 16, 1800; Ibid. iii. 288.

* "At the close of this important struggle, it is but justice to our friends to represent to your Grace that their zeal and fidelity has far exceeded what I could have formed any expectation of. Some, perhaps, embarked not with the most cordial feelings to the measure; but all, since the defection of the Bagwells, &c., have acted with perfect honour, and many of them with a degree of energy which I trust will recommend them to his Majesty's favour."—LORD CASTLEREAGH *to* DUKE OF PORTLAND, *June* 9, 1800; *Cornwallis Correspondence*, iii. 256.

of the Union; and Lord Cornwallis, in driving through the streets of Dublin, had the satisfaction of hearing the expressions burst from the crowd—"There he is; God bless him:" "a grateful sound," he justly observes, "to one who had governed the country for two years by martial law."

101. Difficulties on the part of Government in the creation of peerages. June 16.

The Union was now carried, and with much less irritation and disturbance at last than had been anticipated; but a long account remained for Government to settle with those by whose efforts this had been effected: and when they came to do so, Lord Cornwallis and Lord Castlereagh experienced scarcely less difficulty than they had done in urging the measure through Parliament. They experienced the usual ingratitude shown by the holders of power to those by whom great services have been rendered which are no longer required. Aware that the measure could never be forced through with the existing Irish Parliament but by influence, and that often of the grossest kind, Lord Castlereagh as well as the Lord-Lieutenant had all along warned the English Government that this was the only way in which the desired object could be effected, and they had received repeated pledges to support whatever measures might be deemed necessary, or promises to insure success.* In a private verbal conference with Mr Pitt, Lord Cornwallis had mentioned sixteen peerages or advancements in the peerage, as required to insure the support of the requisite number of influential landholders; and no objection had been stated, nor indeed could any such have been advanced, as fourteen peerages had been conferred on a less important occasion in 1796.† No sooner was

* When Lord Castlereagh was in England, he went through the list of the Irish peers with Mr Pitt, with a view to the representative peerage, when the latter did not ask it for Lord Grandison, and rather scouted the idea of Lord Sheffield when Lord C. stopped at his name; and he consented to *eighteen* new peers, and did not absolutely limit us to that number, although our conduct has been reprobated for sending over a list of *sixteen*."—LORD CORNWALLIS *to* GENERAL ROSS, *July* 11, 1800; *Cornwallis Correspondence*, iii. 277.

† "Every despatch written during the last eighteen months fully apprised the English Ministers that the measure could only be carried by the force of

CHAP. I. 1800.

the bill passed, therefore, than Lord Cornwallis sent to the Duke of Portland a letter enclosing a list of the peerages, sixteen in number, which he had promised to the supporters of the measure, being all persons of fortune adequate to support this dignity, and whose services entitled them to expect it. But either Mr Pitt had not communicated to the Duke of Portland what had passed on the subject, or insurmountable difficulties had been experienced in the highest quarter when the list came to be examined, for his Grace returned a cold answer, making difficulties at every step, and declining to recommend one-half of the names submitted to his Majesty for approval. The conduct both of Lord Cornwallis and Lord Castlereagh upon this was dignified and decided. They both wrote immediately to the Duke of Portland, saying, in respectful but firm language, that if Government was unable to make good the promises they had made on their behalf to their supporters, they could no longer retain office under them. The private letters of both at this crisis breathe a warm and very natural feeling of indignation at such a return being made for the services they had rendered to their country.*

June 13.

influence, and now to disavow promises would gain no popularity for themselves, while it would disappoint their supporters and disgrace the Irish Government."—*Cornwallis Correspondence*, iii. 266. The sum ultimately awarded to the sufferers by the Union in the form of boroughs disfranchised, seats lost in Parliament, and the like, was £1,260,000. Lord Downshire, for seven seats, got £52,500; and Lord Ely, £45,000.—*Cornwallis Correspondence*, iii. 323, 324.

* "After having passed two painful years of difficulty and anxiety, my prospect had begun to brighten. The spirit of rebellion was almost universally subsiding, and the great and important measure of Union was not only carried by a majority in Parliament, but received throughout the nation, and even in the metropolis, with less ill-humour than could have been expected; and many of the most respectable, although not during the contest the least violent, of the anti-Unionists, had declared that they no longer wished to be ranked amongst the opposers of Government. But your Grace's despatches of the 12th and 13th, as far as my personal feelings are concerned, have placed me in a more distressing situation than I have yet experienced. In the most severe trials I have hitherto been able to conduct myself with a firmness becoming a man of honour and integrity; but now my condition is so much altered, that I must either say to those whom I am about to disappoint that I will not keep my word with them, or acknowledge that I have pretended to have powers which I did not possess, and that I must declare my engagements to be void because his Majesty's Ministers have refused to fulfil them. . . . The whole number of peerages recommended are sixteen. In June 1796, at the period of the

This spirited conduct had the desired effect. Government were in no condition to withstand so serious a disruption of their Irish administration, or to exhibit to the world the spectacle of men who had rendered the great-

general election, one viscount and fourteen barons were created in England; which circumstance, in addition to these favours being indispensable to the success of the measure, led me to suppose that sixteen would not be thought an unreasonable number on so important an occasion as that of uniting the two kingdoms. . . . I am so overcome by your Grace's letter that I know not how to proceed in the mortifying detail. There was no sacrifice that I should not have been happy to make for the service of my king and country, except that of my honour. The mischief, however, will not end with my disgrace; but the confidence in the English Government will be shaken, and the ill-humour of our disappointed supporters will greatly retard the benefits which might have been expected from the measure, and will not tend to strengthen the hands of my successor. . . . His Majesty will, I am persuaded, see the necessity of my having entered into embarrassing engagements according to the various circumstances which occurred during the long and arduous contest; and if any of them should appear so strongly to merit his disapprobation as to induce him to withhold his consent to their being carried into effect, he will be pleased to allow me to retire from a station which I could no longer hold with honour to myself or with any prospect of advantage to his service."—LORD CORNWALLIS *to* DUKE OF PORTLAND, *June* 17, 1800; *Cornwallis Correspondence*, iii. 262-266.

Lord Castlereagh's language was even more decided. "If the Irish Government is not enabled to keep faith with the various individuals who have acted upon a principle of confidence in their honour, it is morally impossible that either Lord Cornwallis or I can remain in our present situations; . . . it will remain a breach of faith, as injurious to the character of Government as to our own, having given an assurance which we were not enabled to fulfil."—LORD CASTLEREAGH *to* LORD CAMDEN, *June* 18, 1800; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, iii. 327.

"I should hope, if Lord Cornwallis has been the person to buy out and secure to the Crown for ever the fee-simple of Irish corruption, which has so long enfeebled the powers of Government and endangered the connection, that he is not to be the first sacrifice to his own exertions; nor is the present the first occasion upon which the King's Ministers will, I trust, think it expedient to conciliate popular opinion, by failing towards those who have served them to the best of their abilities."—LORD CASTLEREAGH *to* MR COOKE (Secretary to the Duke of Portland), *June* 21, 1800; *Ibid.*, iii. 333.

"Lord Cornwallis was always desirous to carry the Duke of Portland's judgment and concurrence with him on every point; but the Union could not have been effected but by a person intrusted with unlimited authority; and it would have been fatal to the measure if the objections, or even the disinclination, of Ministers to any proposed arrangement had transpired."—LORD CASTLEREAGH *to* MR COOKE, *June* 25, 1800; *Cornwallis Correspondence*, iii. 267.

"For my personal gratification, nothing could be so desirable as my quitting my present station; but I am afraid that my abrupt departure, under the marked disapprobation of the English Government, would be attended with fatal consequences in this country. You may be assured that I will act with temper, and bear everything but what would absolutely dishonour me, for the sake of the public."—MARQUESS CORNWALLIS *to* GENERAL ROSS, *June* 24 1800; *Ibid.*, iii. 268, 269.

CHAP. I.

1800.

102. Its settlement by concession of Ministers. June 27.

est services to their country receiving no other reward than indignities which obliged them to resign their offices. The Duke of Portland gave way accordingly, and the Cabinet agreed to confirm all Lord Cornwallis's engagements, while the only concession made on his part was, that one of them was prevailed on to relinquish his claim to the representative peerage.* A large number of offices of emolument were at the same time conferred on various subordinate supporters of Government in the struggle, and others promised. The great and acknowledged services of Lord Castlereagh fully entitled him to demand a British peerage for his father the Earl of Londonderry; but both he and his father had the disinterestedness to relieve the Crown of the embarrassment which was felt in creating so many peers, by waiving their present claim to that honour, in return for which the King, in the strongest terms, declared his determination to confer it on the family at any future time when performance of the promise might be requested.† The title, accordingly, was not bestowed at that time, but it was so at an after period, when the great services of Lord Castlereagh had established yet higher claims to promotion. The father then had the proud satisfaction, rarely enjoyed in this world, of being advanced in dignity by the public services of his son.[1]

Jan. 22, 1816.

[1] Burke's Peerage, *voce* Londonderry.

* Sir John Blaqueemo.

† "Lord Londonderry and Lord Castlereagh, who never brought forward any pretensions of their own, are perfectly willing to wait for that mark of his Majesty's favour, to which I thought it my duty to state their pretensions, until it shall suit his Majesty's convenience; but it will be impossible for me to throw back the Marquess of Drogheda on the list of representative peers without being guilty of a breach of a positive engagement."—MARQUESS CORNWALLIS *to the* DUKE OF PORTLAND, *July* 7, 1800; *Cornwallis Correspondence*, iii. 274.

"His Majesty is pleased to authorise your Excellency to assure Lord Londonderry and Lord Castlereagh, that at any time that it may be the wish of Lord Londonderry, or of any of his descendants when in possession of the title, to have a British peerage conferred on them, the sense his Majesty has of Lord Castlereagh's most distinguished and meritorious services will ever be remembered by his Majesty, and his Majesty will be ready to fulfil their wishes in such a manner that, should it not take place in the lifetime of Lord Londonderry, his posterity, by his present or any future countess, would derive the same benefit from it as if the creation had taken place in the lifetime of the present earl."—DUKE OF PORTLAND *to* LORD CORNWALLIS, *June* 27, 1800; *Ibid.*, 273.

103. Difficulty in regard to the Catholic claims.

The difficulty with the supporters of the Union was now surmounted; but another of a more serious kind remained behind, which ultimately proved fatal, not only to the Irish Government, but to Mr Pitt's Administration. The Roman Catholics, it has been seen, remained nearly neutral during the struggle between the Protestant oligarchy and the English Government, slightly inclining only to the support of the Ministry. During the rebellion, however, the Earl of Fingall and the leading Catholics had preserved their faith to Government inviolate during the most trying circumstances, when their co-religionists were maintaining a desperate struggle with those whom they deemed usurpers of their rights and possessions. The British Government had carefully abstained from giving them any distinct pledge that their demands would be acceded to; and both Lord Cornwallis and Lord Castlereagh had been cautious not to implicate either their superiors or themselves in any engagement on the subject. But many things in politics, as in other matters, are only the more distinctly understood from not being openly expressed. It was well known to the Catholic leaders, and indeed to their whole followers, that both Lord Cornwallis and Lord Castlereagh were decidedly favourable to their claims; indeed, that they regarded their early concession as an indispensable preliminary to the pacification of Ireland, and the development of the full benefits which they anticipated from the Union.* The latter had, by the directions of the Lord-Lieutenant, drawn up

* "Our time has been so much occupied of late *by the most important of all possible subjects*, as you will probably have been informed by Lord Castlereagh, that I trust you will forgive us for detaining him till next week, before which it will be impossible for us to take into consideration the different propositions respecting the provisions for Roman Catholic and Dissenting clergy, and the other very important questions, relative to the Roman Catholics in general, and tithes."—DUKE OF PORTLAND *to* LORD CORNWALLIS, *September* 25, 1800; *Cornwallis Correspondence*, iii. 293, 294.

"I cannot help entertaining considerable apprehensions that our Cabinet will not have the firmness to adopt such measures as will render the Union an efficient advantage to the empire. Those things which, if now liberally granted, might make the Irish a loyal people, will be of little avail when they are extorted on a future day. I do not, however, despair."—LORD CORNWALLIS *to* GENERAL ROSS, *October* 8, 1800; *Ibid.*, iii. 294.

CHAP. I. 1800.

and transmitted to Mr Pitt a long and most able memoir on the subject, embracing every argument that has since been or could be advanced on behalf of the Catholics.* The Premier's own opinion entirely went along with these views, and he awaited only a suitable time for bringing them forward in the Cabinet. But it was not so easy a matter to say when that proper time would arrive. Not only was the Cabinet and the country divided upon the subject, but it was well known that objections of a nature which, it was feared, might prove insurmountable, existed in the very highest quarter against any such measure. Thus Mr Pitt, Lord Cornwallis, and Lord Castlereagh, were placed in the painful predicament of having tacitly allowed the Roman Catholics of Ireland, and, of course, of the whole empire, to expect a measure of relief to follow the settlement of the Union, which, when the time for performance arrived, they found themselves unable to realise.

104. Increased difficulties attending the Catholic question.

This situation, so irksome to men of honour, soon became so painful to Lord Cornwallis and Lord Castlereagh, that nothing but a high sense of public duty induced them to remain in office. On the 17th December, Lord Castlereagh sailed for England, in order to lay the whole particulars of the case before Government, and Lord Cornwallis was left in a situation which he himself described to General Ross as "as unhappy as you can conceive."† A strong sense of public duty, however, and an anxious desire to carry through a great measure which

* "The tract which Lord Castlereagh submitted to your Grace on the great Catholic question is so clear and able, and so entirely comprises every material argument that can, in my opinion, be urged on that important measure, that I shall not trouble your Grace with any further reasoning on a subject of which you are so fully in possession."—LORD CORNWALLIS *to* DUKE OF PORTLAND, *December* 1, 1800; *Cornwallis Correspondence*, iii. 306. It is not to be found in *Castlereagh Correspondence*.

† "Lord Castlereagh sailed last night for England, and Elliot follows in a few days, so I shall be left to transact all public business with Cooke. My situation is altogether as unhappy as you can conceive, and I see no hope of relief, and yet I cannot in conscience and in duty to my country abandon the Catholic question, without which all we have done will be of no avail. It was said, when I determined to free myself at the first outset from the trammels of the ruling party here, that I should not be able to carry on the Government. No prediction ever proved more false; and you may be assured that

could alone develop the full beneficial effects of the Union, induced both to remain at their posts some little time longer. Lord Castlereagh arrived in London on the 22d December, and immediately entered into close communication on the subject with the Duke of Portland and Mr Pitt, to whom his able tract in favour of the Catholics had previously been communicated. He found, however, the difficulties in the way of an adjustment much greater than he had previously anticipated. Not that there was any doubt on the part of either of these Ministers on the subject, though they had never pledged themselves to any time or specific course of action; but it had been ascertained that insurmountable difficulties lay in the way of its settlement in other quarters. The King had very recently become acquainted with what was in agitation, and he was deeply affected by it; for his own resolution was fixed never to make any further concessions to the Catholics, and he knew the strength of Mr Pitt's determination too well not to entertain apprehensions that the collision might break up the Cabinet. What passed on these important occasions is fully explained in a long letter of Lord Castlereagh to Mr Pitt on 1st January 1801, in which the views entertained by Mr Pitt, Lord Cornwallis, and himself, are so clearly stated, that any paraphrase or abridgment is superfluous.[1] *

[1] Cornwallis Corresp. iii. 330-332.

all the powerful opposers of the measure in favour of the Catholics would join in giving their approbation as soon as it is effected."—MARQUESS CORNWALLIS *to* GENERAL ROSS, *December* 18, 1800; *Cornwallis Correspondence*, iii. 313.

* "When I left Lord Cornwallis, he certainly was prepared for some difference of opinion in the Cabinet on the principle of the measure itself, and for much caution on the part of his Majesty's Ministers in general, with respect to the period when they might think themselves justified in prudence in proposing to Parliament so important an alteration of the Test laws; but he did not apprehend, from anything that had hitherto passed on the subject, that their sentiments were adverse to the principle of the measure connected with the Union, much less that they were prepared to oppose the question on its merits, and to declare their determination to resist hereafter any further concession to the Catholics. As this impression on his Excellency's mind was in a great measure the result of what passed with reference to this subject when I was in England in the autumn of 1799, I think it necessary to recall to your recollection that, after the details of the Union had been completed, I was directed by the Lord-Lieutenant to represent to you the state of parties as they stood

CHAP. L

1801.

105. Difficulties of the King and Cabinet on the subject.

It appears that Mr Pitt, either not anticipating any serious opposition to the measure of relief to the Catholics which he had in contemplation, or wishing to postpone the dreaded moment of explanation with his royal master, had not made him aware of what had passed on the subject with Lord Cornwallis and Lord Castlereagh;

at that time in Ireland, and particularly to request that you would ascertain what was likely to be the ultimate decision of his Majesty's Ministers with respect to the Catholics, as his Excellency felt it to be of equal importance to the future quiet of Ireland, to his own feelings, and to the credit of Administration in both countries, that he should so conduct himself towards that body as to preclude hereafter any well-founded imputation, or even any strong impression on their minds, that they had been deceived. The statement I then made was, as I recollect, nearly to the following effect: that we had a majority in Parliament composed of very doubtful materials; that the Protestant body was divided on the question, with the disadvantage of Dublin and the Orange societies against us; and that the Catholics were holding back under a doubt whether the Union would facilitate or impede their object. I stated it as the opinion of the Irish Government that, circumstanced as the parliamentary interests and the Protestant feelings then were, the measure could not be carried if the Catholics were embarked in an active opposition to it, and that their resistance would be unanimous and zealous if they had reason to suppose that the sentiments of Ministers would remain unchanged in respect to their exclusion; while the measure of Union in itself might give them additional means of disappointing their hopes. I stated that several attempts had been made by leading Catholics to bring Government to an explanation, which had, of course, been evaded; and that the body, thus left to their own speculations in respect to the future influence of the Union upon their cause, were, with some exceptions, either neutral or actual opponents; the former entertaining hopes, but not inclining to support decidedly without some encouragement from Government—the latter entirely hostile, from a persuasion that it would so strengthen the Protestant interest as to perpetuate their exclusion. I represented that the friends of Government, by flattering the hopes of the Catholics, had produced a favourable impression in Cork, Tipperary, and Galway; but that, in proportion as his Excellency had felt the advantage of this popular support, he was anxious to be ascertained, in availing himself of the assistance which he knew was alone given in contemplation of its being auxiliary to their own views, that he was not involving Government in future difficulties with that body, by exposing them to a charge of duplicity; and he was peculiarly desirous of being secure against such a risk before he *personally* encouraged the Catholics to come forward, and to afford him that assistance which he felt to be so important to the success of the measure. In consequence of this representation, the Cabinet took the measure into their consideration; and having been directed to attend the meeting, I was charged to convey to Lord Cornwallis the result, and his Excellency was referred by the Duke of Portland to me for a statement of the opinions of his Majesty's Ministers on this important subject. Accordingly, I communicated to Lord Cornwallis that the opinion of the Cabinet was favourable to the principle of the measure; that some doubt was entertained as to the possibility of admitting Catholics into some of the *higher offices;* and that Ministers anticipated considerable repugnance to the measure in many quarters, and particu-

and it was only in the beginning of January that he was made aware of it. He expressed himself warmly on this point at the time;* and there can be no doubt that his

larly in the *highest;* but that, as far as the sentiments of the Cabinet were concerned, his Excellency need not hesitate in calling forth the Catholic support, in whatever degree he found it practicable to obtain it. . . . The instructions which I was directed to convey to Lord Cornwallis were to the following effect: that his Excellency was fully warranted in soliciting every support the Catholics could afford; that he need not apprehend, as far as the sentiments of the Cabinet were concerned, being involved in the difficulty with that body which he seemed to apprehend; that it was not thought expedient at that time to give any direct assurance to the Catholics; but that, should circumstances so far alter as to induce his Excellency to consider such an explanation necessary, he was at liberty to state the grounds on which his opinion was formed for the consideration of the Cabinet. In consequence of this communication, the Irish Government omitted no exertion to call forth the Catholics in favour of the Union. Their efforts were very generally successful, and the advantage derived from them was highly useful, particularly in depriving the Opposition of the means they otherwise would have had in the southern and western counties of making an impression on the county members. His Excellency was enabled to accomplish his purpose without giving the Catholics any direct assurance of being gratified, and throughout the contest earnestly avoided being driven to such an expedient, as he considered a gratuitous concession after the measure as infinitely more consistent with the character of Government. The Union being carried, I was directed by the Lord-Lieutenant, when last in England, to recall the attention of his Majesty's Ministers to the Catholic question, and to impress on their minds the anxiety his Excellency felt that they should not suffer themselves to be anticipated in the purposed Act of Grace by the Opposition. On my return to Ireland, I apprised his Excellency that sentiments unfavourable to the concession had been expressed by the highest law authority, and that the Cabinet at large did not feel themselves enabled, in his Majesty's absence, and without sounding opinions in other quarters, to take a final decision on so momentous a question; but I did not feel myself warranted, from anything that had passed, to disappoint the hopes his Excellency had been led so distinctly to form, and which he still continued to entertain, should the ultimate decision of his Majesty's Ministers accord with the statement of the question to which I have alluded. You will easily conceive that, in addition to the public regret his Excellency will experience at the abandonment of a measure which he considers to be essential to the future interests of the empire, he will feel a peculiar degree of pain in finding himself placed in those awkward circumstances, with respect to the Catholics, to which he foresaw the transaction in itself was so likely to lead, and which he took every possible precaution to avoid."—LORD CASTLEREAGH *to* MR PITT, *January* 1, 1801; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, iv. 8-12.

* "I cannot but regret that, on the late unhappy occasion, I had not been treated with more confidence previous to forming an opinion, which, to my greatest surprise, I learned on Thursday from Earl Spencer, has been in agitation ever since Lord Castlereagh came over in August, yet of which I never had the smallest suspicion till within these very few weeks; but so desirous was I to avoid the present conclusion, that—except what passed with Earl Spencer and Lord Grenville about three weeks past, and a hint I gave to Mr Secretary Dundas on Wednesday sevenight—I have been silent on the subject,

CHAP. I. 1801.

complaints of having been treated without sufficient confidence, were in a great measure well founded. But the evil was done, and could not be undone; and the result was that the English Cabinet was brought into a dilemma from whence Mr Pitt saw no means of extrication; for on the one hand he was impelled, by a sense of public duty to the empire and a regard to his own honour, to make good the engagements *tacitly* undertaken with his approbation by Lord Cornwallis, and on the other he experienced an insurmountable difficulty in doing so in the unconquerable repugnance and known firmness of character of the sovereign. In these circumstances he adopted the only course open to a man of principle and honour; he resigned his situation as Prime Minister, and his resignation was with the deepest regret accepted by his Majesty. With Mr Pitt, Lord Grenville, Earl Spencer, Lord Camden, Mr Dundas, and Mr Windham, tendered their resignations, which were also accepted, thereby entirely rooting out the party favourable to the Catholics from the Cabinet.[1]

Feb. 5.

[1] Cornwallis Corresp. iii. 343, 344; Castlereagh Corresp. iv. 37, 38.

106. Mr Pitt's views on the occasion.

The motives of Mr Pitt in taking this decisive step, and leaving the helm at a time when Great Britain, threatened with the Northern Coalition, may be truly said to have been in the crisis of the war, must have been of the most weighty kind; and they are thus stated, in a confidential letter by Lord Castlereagh to Lord Cornwallis, four days after the resignation:—"Mr Pitt, from a conviction, I conclude, that the King's mind could not give way, and seeing the danger of the State falling into the hands of Opposition, has used his utmost influence with his friends to lend themselves to the new arrangement. He will take the first opportunity of the question being regularly before the House to state his opinion at large upon it; but he does not think that it will be expedient, either with reference to the success of the question itself

and, indeed, hoping that Mr Pitt had not pledged himself on what I cannot, with my sentiments of religious and political duty, think myself at liberty to concur."—*The* KING *to the* HON. HENRY DUNDAS, *February* 7, 1801; *Cornwallis Correspondence*, iii. 333.

or the predicament in which the King stands, for him to press the measure under the present circumstances. The inclination of his mind, after having argued the question, is not to vote at all. He is of opinion that to try the question now would only pledge people against it; that we should have no chance of success in the Lords; but a still stronger reason operates on his mind for not so pressing it, which he particularly desires that I may represent to your Excellency—namely, the conviction that, were the question carried in both Houses, it would be deprived of all its benefits, and the King would, at all risks, refuse his assent. Under these considerations, it is his wish that your Excellency, without bringing forward the King's name, should make the Catholics feel that an obstacle which the King's Ministers could not surmount precluded them from bringing forward the measure whilst in office; that their attachment to the question was such that they felt it impossible to continue in Administration under the impossibility of proposing it with the necessary concurrence, and that they retired from the King's service, considering this line of conduct as most likely to contribute to the ultimate success of the measure; to represent to them how much their future hopes must depend upon strengthening their cause by good conduct; in the mean time, that they ought to weigh their prospects as arising from the persons who now espouse their interests, and compare them with those which they could look to from any other quarter; that they may naturally rely on the zealous support of all those who now retire, and of many that remain, when it can be given with any prospect of success; in the mean time, that Mr Pitt would do his utmost to establish their cause in the public favour, and thus prepare the way for its ultimate success; but that they must distinctly understand that he would not concur in a hopeless attempt at this moment to force it; and that he must at all times repress, with the same decision as if he held an adverse opinion, any unconstitutional conduct in

CHAP. I.

1801.

the Catholic body. This will give your Excellency the outline of that communication which he thinks himself alone authorised to make to them. To look to any specific time to which they might attach their hopes, is so indefinite and so delicate a consideration, as your Excellency will feel is scarcely to be touched upon. From what has already passed, the prospect of a change of sentiments on the part of the King seems too hopeless to be held out, in fairness to the Catholics, as any solid ground of hope; and his death is that solution of the difficulty which all parties must equally deprecate."[1]*

[1] Lord Castlereagh to Lord Cornwallis, Feb. 9, 1801; Castlereagh Corresp. iv. 39, 40.

107: Illness of the King, which precludes all further discussion of the Catholic claims at this time.

A melancholy proof was soon afforded of the violence of the struggle which had existed in the King's mind between his religious scruples regarding the Catholics and his attachment to Mr Pitt. On the 12th February his Majesty became unwell; and, after an indisposition of ten days, the symptoms of mental alienation became so decided that Dr Willis was sent for, and two persons were appointed by him to sit up in his chambers during the night. His symptoms were not so much those of entire derangement as of mental oppression and anxiety. He spoke calmly and without undue excitement all the time, and often found relief in a copious flood of tears. Great care was taken to prevent the malady from increasing; and in the beginning of March his recovery was so far advanced that the daily bulletins regarding his health were discontinued, and he soon entirely recovered. But this dreadful event, which threw both the Government and the nation into the utmost perplexity, was conclusive against any further agitation of the Catholic question at this time. To do so, as Mr Pitt justly observed, would be to hold himself up to the nation as the murderer of his sovereign.[2] In the first moments of consternation at its occurrence, that Minister offered to resume office without making the concession of the Catholic claims a con-

[2] Duke of Portland to Lord Cornwallis, Feb. 23, 1801; Cornwallis Corresp. iii. 341-343.

* In a postscript to this letter it is added, "Mr Pitt has seen the first part of this letter."

dition of his doing so. But matters had gone too far to render such an arrangement feasible, and the recovery of the King in the beginning of March removed the necessity of any such seeming sacrifice of principle. Mr Addington, therefore, remained Premier; and Lord Cornwallis and Lord Castlereagh held office in Ireland only till their successors were appointed.

108. Lord Hardwicke the new Lord-Lieutenant.

It was no easy matter, however, to say who these successors would be, for such was the sense entertained of the disturbed state of Ireland, and the difficulties of governing the country, now that the settlement of the Catholic claims was indefinitely adjourned, that no one could at first be found who would take the situation. Lord Proby and several other noblemen were talked of, but they all declined; at length, however, Lord Hardwicke agreed to accept it, and the Right Honourable Charles Abbot, afterwards Lord Colchester, was appointed Chief Secretary in room of Lord Castlereagh. Neither of these elevated functionaries, however, entered upon the discharge of their duties till the May following, as the critical situation of Ireland rendered any change of its local administration hazardous till the probable irritation among the Catholics, from the disappointment of their hopes, had in some degree subsided, and the new Ministers were firmly seated in their respective offices at headquarters.[1]

March 17.

[1] Lord Cornwallis to Duke of Portland, Feb. 19, 1801; Cornwallis Corresp. ii. 339.

109. Patriotic conduct of Lord Cornwallis and Lord Castlereagh.

Lord Cornwallis and Lord Castlereagh acted a truly patriotic and disinterested part on this occasion. Although their minds, from the very beginning, were entirely made up no longer to hold office in Ireland when their hopes of a favourable settlement with the Catholics were at an end, and although their situation was to the last degree painful, after the disappointment they had met with, they yet, at the earnest request of Government and their own successors, continued at their posts for two months longer from a sense of public duty.*

* "No consideration could induce me to take a responsible part with any Administration who could be so blind to the interest, and indeed to the imme-

CHAP. I. 1801.

The intervening period was actively employed by them in explaining to the leading Catholics the real nature of the difficulties which had obstructed the settlement of the question, and the course which was earnestly recommended to them by their friends in the Administration. For this purpose Mr Pitt had prepared a memorandum, which he transmitted to Lord Cornwallis, describing his view of the present position of the question, and the course which he had chalked out for himself, and recommended to them with a view to the ultimate attainment of the object of their desires.* This memorandum, which

diate security of their country, as to persevere in the old system of proscription and exclusion in Ireland. My sentiments on this head are sufficiently known; and I have heard from pretty good authority that my successor is fixed, and I have some reason to guess that Lord Hobart is the person. I feel it, however, to be my duty to my country not to quit my station angrily, and to employ such reasonable space of time as it may suit Government to take in sending over a successor, in endeavouring to tranquillise the minds of the Catholics, to persuade them to wait with patience for the accomplishment of their wishes."—LORD CORNWALLIS *to* GENERAL ROSS, *February* 15, 1801; *Cornwallis Correspondence*, iii. 337.

* "The leading part of his Majesty's Ministers finding insurmountable obstacles to the bringing forward measures of concession to the Catholic body whilst in office, have felt it impossible to continue in administration under the inability to propose it with the circumstances necessary to carrying the measure with all its advantages, and they have retired from his Majesty's service, considering this line of conduct as most likely to contribute to its ultimate success. The Catholic body will, therefore, see how much their future hopes must depend upon strengthening their cause by good conduct. In the mean time they will prudently consider their prospects as arising from the persons who now espouse their interests, and compare them with those which they could look to from any other quarter. They may with confidence rely on the zealous support of all those who retire, and of many who remain in office, when it can be given with a prospect of success. They may be assured that Mr Pitt will do his utmost to establish their cause in the public favour, and prepare the way for their finally attaining their objects. And the Catholics will feel that, as Mr Pitt could not concur in a hopeless attempt to force it now, he must at all times repress, with the same decision as if he held an adverse opinion, any unconstitutional conduct in the Catholic body. Under these circumstances it cannot be doubted that the Catholics will take the most loyal, dutiful, and patient line of conduct; that they will not suffer themselves to be led into measures which can by any construction give a handle to the opposers of their wishes, either to misinterpret their principles or to raise an argument for resisting their claims; but by their prudent and exemplary demeanour they will afford additional grounds to the growing number of their advocates to enforce their claims on proper occasions until their objects can be finally and advantageously attained."—*Memorandum by* MR PITT, *sent to* LORD CORNWALLIS, *March* 9, 1801; *Cornwallis Correspondence*, iii. 347.

precisely coincided with that already given, which Lord Castlereagh had drawn up "almost at his dictation," was communicated by Lord Cornwallis to Lord Fingall. Dr Troy and the leading Irish Catholics on this occasion professed themselves entirely satisfied, and declared their resolution to walk by the advice given, and quietly await the time when their friends in power might again bring forward their claims with some prospect of success. They faithfully acted up to these professions; but unfortunately the lead of the Catholic body ere long slipped out of their hands. Revolutionary projects were again entertained and in part acted upon by less scrupulous leaders; and the agitation for the repeal of the Union for a quarter of a century prevented all the beneficial effects from taking place, which were, with reason, anticipated from its adoption!

110. Beneficial effects of the Union.

Such as it was, however, and grievously as it has been thwarted in its operation by the violent strife of parties of which Ireland almost ever since has been the theatre, the measure of the Union has produced effects in the highest degree important to the real interests of Ireland, and amply justifying the strenuous exertions which Lord Cornwallis and Lord Castlereagh made to bring it about. Statistical results of unquestionable accuracy demonstrate this. It appears that between the years 1801 and 1825 the exports of Ireland to Great Britain had considerably more than doubled, and the imports from Great Britain increased in a similar proportion.* In articles of agri-

* Imports and Exports between Ireland and Great Britain.

Years.	Imports to Ireland from Great Britain.	Exports from Great Britain to Ireland.
1801,	£3,270,350	£3,537,725
1805,	4,067,717	4,288,167
1809,	5,316,557	4,588,305
1813,	6,746,353	5,410,296
1817,	4,722,706	5,696,616
1821,	5,338,828	7,117,452
1825,	7,048,936	8,531,365

After 1825 no similar return can be given, as the trade between Great Britain and Ireland was assimilated to the coasting trade of Great Britain itself.—Porter's *Progress of the Nation*, 342, 3d edit.

CHAP. I. 1801.

cultural produce, which form the staple of the country, the change has been still more remarkable, and indeed so great as to appear almost fabulous. Thus, for example, the pigs exported, which, at the Union in 1801, were only 1968, had increased in 1825 to 65,919, and in 1846 had swelled to the enormous number of 480,827! The cattle exported to England, which in 1801 were 31,543, in 1825 were 63,519, and in 1846, 186,483. The tonnage employed in the trade to Great Britain, which in 1801 was 582,033, had swelled in 1810 to 763,488, and in 1849 had reached 2,159,954 tons. The export of grain from Ireland to Great Britain, which in 1815 was 821,192 quarters, in 1825 was 2,203,962 quarters, and in 1845, 3,251,901 tons. It is evident, therefore, that during the half-century immediately following the Union, the material interests of Ireland had enormously benefited, to an extent perhaps greater than those of any other country in Europe during the same period; and this decisively demonstrates the immense benefits which those patriots had conferred upon their country, who, in the face of the most strenuous opposition, forced its adoption. What, then, would it have been if the great measure of Catholic emancipation had at the same time been carried out, and subsequent agitators deprived of their strongest topics of inflammation by the removal of the last remaining real object of complaint![1]

[1] Porter's Progress of the Nations, 3d edit. 342-346.

111. Lord Hardwicke succeeds Lord Cornwallis in Dublin, and Lord Castlereagh remains in London. May 17.

Lord Cornwallis continued in Dublin till the middle of May, when, the city and country being quiet, it was deemed safe for him to give place to his successor. On the 17th of that month Lord Hardwicke arrived and entered upon his duties as Lord-Lieutenant, Mr Abbot being his Chief Secretary. Lord Castlereagh remained in London in close and daily communication with Mr Pitt, who soon conceived the very highest opinion of his principles and capacity. He sat for the county of Down in the United Parliament, where he also gave proof of his great information and abilities. The at-

traction between him and Mr Pitt was irresistible: their minds were in many respects similar, and the views by which both were animated were the same. Without Mr Pitt's matchless powers of eloquence, Lord Castlereagh had all his devoted love to his country, his admirable temper, his vast administrative powers, his just and impartial view of public affairs, his cool and imperturbable courage. Both were born to be the rulers of men and the arbiters of nations; and it was the good fortune of the latter to carry out and bring to a triumphant conclusion the system of policy of which the former laid the foundation. Mr Pitt thus spoke of him at this period in the House of Commons:—"The noble lord has this night given proof that there are among us talents of the first rate, which talents, whether in or out of office, will always be ready for exertion, as occasion may arise, against the most bitter enemy of human happiness that ever yet appeared in this world—Jacobinism."[1]*

[1] Castlereagh Corresp. iv. 5; Parl. Hist.

112. Obloquy to which Lord Castlereagh was exposed from the magnitude of his public services.

Lord Castlereagh was not yet thirty-one years of age, and already he had, in the most important particulars, rendered essential service to his country. He had encountered and vanquished a formidable Jacobin revolt, aided by treachery at home and assistance from abroad; he had terminated the rule of the corrupt oligarchy which had so long oppressed the country, and laid the only possible foundation for its future prosperity in an indissoluble union with Great Britain. Though thwarted at the moment in his endeavours to extract from it the deadly poison of religious rancour, he had materially advanced the cause of religious peace by the efforts he had made in its behalf. It might naturally be supposed that

* The fatigue and anxiety of mind with which Lord Castlereagh was oppressed at this time threw him into a fever in London of several weeks' continuance, and excited the serious apprehensions of his friends. On April 22, Lord Cornwallis wrote to General Ross, "I have been for some days under great anxiety about Lord Castlereagh;" and again, on May 7, "I have been, and indeed am still, very uneasy about Lord Castlereagh, who has had a return of his fever. They tell me there is no danger, but I have no idea of a fever of so long continuance without danger."—*Cornwallis Correspondence*, iii. 357, 359.

CHAP. I. 1801.

such acts would have secured him the lasting gratitude and esteem of all classes in his country. It was quite the reverse, and he reaped from his efforts and great services nothing but hatred and rancour. The revolutionists could never forgive him for having crushed their insurrection, and for ever blasted their hopes of a Hibernian republic in close alliance with France, and with themselves at its head. The Protestant oligarchy were exasperated at him for having terminated their withering rule; defeated corruption by its own weapons; and successfully enlisted the selfish principles against them. They were fain to lay upon him the severity and cruelties which in fact had arisen from the license of their own supporters. The Catholics have come to see that the union with Great Britain which he brought about has been fatal to the exclusive domination which they hoped to establish in a purely Irish Parliament by their numerical majority, and that they must be content to be ruled like their other fellow-subjects, not to rule them. Their main efforts, accordingly, have been directed to undo the union which he had effected. The English aristocracy were jealous of such great things having been done by one who was not of themselves, and the dangerous precedent being established of the chief direction of Irish affairs being placed in the hands of an Irishman by birth. All parties were alike exasperated against the youthful statesman who had thus boldly interposed between them, and, disregarding all separate interests, pursued only the ultimate advantage of the country. It is to this combination of parties the most opposite and irreconcilable that the prejudice which has so long existed against his memory is to be ascribed, and that the firmest foundation for its ultimate vindication is laid. "The present and the future," says Sir Joshua Reynolds, "are rivals; he who pays court to the one must lay his account with being discountenanced by the other."

CHAPTER II.

LORD CASTLEREAGH FROM HIS RESIGNATION OF OFFICE IN IRELAND IN 1801, TO THE ACCESSION OF THE WHIGS TO POWER IN APRIL 1806.

1. Lord Castlereagh's debut in the British Parliament.

THE resignation of Mr Pitt, and with him of the whole Irish Administration, on the Catholic question, in February 1801, withdrew Lord Castlereagh from the theatre of his former exertions and usefulness. But it was a fortunate circumstance for the general interests of the country that he was then removed from the scene of local strife and ambition, and launched into the wide career, more suitable to his talents, which the large concerns of the empire at headquarters presented. His mind, naturally grasping in details, and yet capacious in generalisation, qualified him to acquire, with surprising rapidity, a thorough acquaintance with the great imperial questions of the day; and his intimate acquaintance with Mr Pitt imbued him with a complete knowledge of the views of that great statesman, especially on the all-important subject of the contest with the French revolutionary power. This was a matter of the very highest importance, and deeply affected his entire future life and history. It will hereafter appear that Lord Castlereagh's whole policy, when he became in a manner the arbiter of Europe in 1814 and 1815, was a carrying out of the views of Mr Pitt, as developed in the formation of the European Confederacy in 1805; and it was at this time that these

CHAP. II. 1801.

views were first fully impressed upon him. How seldom in this world is wisdom and patriotism thus privileged to leave its mantle to a successor, and find in a kindred soul and a congenial character the fitting depositary and destined accomplisher of its greatest designs!

2. His measures in Parliament regarding Ireland.

Though no longer, after Lord Hardwicke's appointment, officially connected with Ireland, Lord Castlereagh did not lose sight of the interests of his country; and his great information and calm views led to his being intrusted with the principal measures regarding it under Mr Addington's Administration. The two most important of these in the session of 1801, were the Act for the continuing of the Act for the Suppression of Rebellion in Ireland, and the suppression of the *Habeas Corpus* Act. Both were intrusted to Lord Castlereagh, and they came on in March and April. He said: "It is a painful duty to call on the House to re-enact a law such as this. Every man must feel a reluctance at bringing forward any measure which is to trench, as I admit this does, on the natural rights of the subject. It was reserved for the modern principles of Jacobinism to make it compulsory on the Government of Ireland to give existence to a system of judicature founded upon martial law. Such a system became necessary at a period when all law was suspended, when all duties were violated, and when the safety of the chief magistrate and the Government depended upon its vigorous application. If there be now the same necessity for continuing that measure, I am sure the House will not forget its duty or abandon the safety of the constitution by refusing to sanction it. This is an act of necessity which cannot longer be delayed.

3. Continued.

"The rebellion broke out in May 1798, and the Government then published a proclamation of martial law. They proceeded from May 1798 to May 1799 exercising martial law wherever rebellion existed, without any express enactment for that purpose, on the principle that they were authorised by the King's prerogative, provided

they did not transgress the necessity of the case. Nothing could have induced them to alter the strict constitutional system, but that they felt they must deny to a great part of the country the advantages of the civil law unless it was incorporated with the martial law. The two systems could not coexist; for how could the martial law be executed if it was liable to be thwarted by the civil law? Though it was put down in the field, the spirit of Jacobinism infused itself into the country, which it afflicted in a manner still more distressing, because not liable to be in the same manner attacked by the King's forces. Rebellion is not less rebellion because it is less open; because it aims at thwarting the administration of civil justice in the courts of law, not combating the soldiers in open warfare. By the energy of the King's forces it has been driven from the open field; but if martial law is not permitted, the same system of terror will prevail, and the Government cannot expect from the loyal and well affected an allegiance which it is incapable of protecting. Such has been the necessity of the case that it has superseded all formal authority. From the moment when martial law was first proclaimed it has never yet been suspended. During the last year no less than 207 persons have been tried, of whom 63 were tried under the bill authorising martial law, and 34 condemned to death. The noble lord intrusted with the Government of Ireland would never have exercised such powers if a necessity for them did not exist, and unfortunately that necessity is noways abated.

"The whole disturbances of Ireland are directed, first, against the persons and property of the well affected, and, secondly, against the courts of justice; therefore the House must feel, unless there be some mode of bringing those persons who are engaged in acts of rebellion summarily to trial, that we are subjecting our friends to certain destruction. You will see from the report of the committee, that the rebels have their own courts-martial

4. Concluded.

CHAP. II. 1801.

against the well affected. It is impossible to keep up any system of coercion, if you can only have the ordinary tedious process of the municipal law against persons guilty of rebellion, when the persons who sat on the juries of the offenders are themselves liable to be put to the bar of the summary rebel courts, which adjudge with the rapidity of lightning, and execute without mercy. The system of rebellion in Ireland, now transmuted from contests in the field to secret assassination and threatenings, is one unparalleled in history, unknown in any other age or country. The only gleam of hope arises from this consideration, that it is greatly circumscribed in the sphere of its operation. Last year it was confined to three counties, Antrim, Limerick, and Wicklow, and the people have generally shown great readiness to aid in the suppression of these disturbances. The law is not to be carried into execution except in case of actual rebellion; and every case under it is brought under the special revision of the Lord-Lieutenant and law officers of the Crown; and the jurisdiction of the courts-martial is confined to crimes in furtherance of rebellion. While the rebellion exists it must be met by energetic measures, and I know of none capable of arresting it but martial law. I know that rebellion has too many friends in every part of the empire, and I do not expect that it will disappear during the war; but at present I propose to continue the Act only for three months, for which period also the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act is to be sustained." The motion was strongly opposed by Sir Lawrence Parsons and the United Jacobin and anti-Union party in the House; but it was supported in an eloquent and convincing speech by Mr Pitt, and passed by a large majority, the numbers being 84 to 8—in the only division which took place on the question.[1] *

[1] Parl. Hist. xxxv. 1010-1014.

* Mr Pitt said, in this debate, in words not less just than eloquent: "This is indeed a measure at once unexampled in the necessity by which it is called for, and in the lenity by which it is distinguished. In former times, when it was

5. Woeful picture of Ireland by the Earl of Clare.

When the Irish question went up to the House of Lords, the Earl of Clare drew in sombre colours a picture of the state of Ireland during the rebellion, even in those quarters where it did not actually break out. "The county of Limerick," said he, "in which I reside, is almost the only one which remained quiet during the revolution, yet a dangerous insurrection suddenly broke out there after it was over. It was begun by an atrocious murder committed under my own roof. One of my servants was put to death, under circumstances of unexampled inhumanity, merely because he was an Englishman; and, to show the extreme barbarity to which the Irish people had arrived, the murderer was a man who had been in the service of my father and myself for thirty years, and been uniformly treated by both with the utmost kindness. The wretch had stolen arms from my house and distributed them among the rebels. When he was led out to execution, he confessed to the priest who attended him, that a list of twenty persons whom it was resolved to murder had been made out, and that his master was among the number; yet I myself was the only individual who gave employment and bread to the poor of the neighbourhood, and without my aid they must have been reduced to extreme misery. The people are not actuated

found necessary to resort to martial law, the contests were soon decided in the field. They did not, as at present, pervade every part of the machine of Government, every artery of the social system; they did not enter into all the concerns of the community, poison all the comforts of private life, and all the sources of public security. The mischief and the danger came armed together into the field; and, the battle won, the victors and the vanquished again enjoyed, though in different proportions, the comforts and the advantages of the social state. In this case, however, the danger is of another and a more malignant species. Here, under the baneful influence of Jacobinism, your enemies, though defeated in the field, only separate; the vital principle of enmity to order and social comfort still remains, confined, indeed, in scantied bounds, and with diminished means, though with undiminished rancour. The prerogative of exercising martial law, which was adequate to a sudden attack and to a passing danger, is not adequate to contend with a rebellion founded on principles so secret, so disseminated, so powerful, and so persevering. To obviate the defects of martial law, founded only on prerogative, it is necessary to improve and enforce it by legislative provisions."—*Parl. Hist.*, xxxv. 1026.

CHAP. II. 1801.

by anything resembling a rational motive, but a mere thirst for blood. If the noble earl (Fitzwilliam) will visit his estates in the county of Wicklow, he will find that these statements are not exaggerated; he will find nothing but traces of desolation and renewal of horrors. Happy, thrice happy, should I be if I could once more go out unarmed! At present my servant brings me my arms as regularly as my hat. To think of repressing this spirit by concession and indulgence is absurd. Acts of that kind, although well meant, have already had a mischievous tendency. The rebels have a system of laws the most severe and most promptly executed. It is far more efficient than the civil code, and can only be counteracted by martial law. If the bill for continuing martial law is not adopted, scenes rivalling in atrocity those which marked the year 1641 will be the consequence. Nothing would be seen over the country but pillage, murder, and conflagration. The conduct of Marquess Cornwallis has been merciful in the extreme. He released many rebels from prison, and granted others a free pardon on giving up their arms. He spent four hours every day in examining the minutes of courts-martial, and never permitted any individual to suffer but after the most minute investigation. Yet this lenity and merciful conduct produced much evil; it was ascribed to fear, and encouraged licentiousness. Such had been the complete organisation of treason and rebellion, that the municipal law, unsupported by the military, not only could not be exercised with effect, but the mere attempt to administer justice was defeated and perverted to the worst purposes. All jurymen who give a conscientious verdict, or witnesses a true evidence, are marked, and their names sent to the provincial committees for proscription and murder."[1]

[1] Parl. Hist. xxxv 1231-1234.

The mind of Lord Castlereagh, eminently judicious and practical, and set on redressing real grievances or guarding against impending dangers, not following out visionary ideas, was no sooner released from the cares of office than

it set itself to prepare the way for the redress of the chief evils which afflicted his country at the moment. These were, the religious rancour consequent on the exclusion of the Catholics from Parliament, the vexation produced by the drawing of tithes in kind by the Protestant clergy, and the constant danger impending over the island, and excitement kept up in the minds of the people, by the chance, it might be said the probability, of a French invasion. Upon each of these points he drew up and submitted to Government a detailed memoir, containing all the arguments on the subject that have been since, or can possibly be, adduced, stated with remarkable clearness and force, and particularly remarkable from the calm statesmanlike views which they exhibit of the question, and the practical remedies which they propose, or dangers which they seek to obviate. They are all given at length in the *Castlereagh Correspondence*, and are highly valuable, not merely as characteristic of the author's mind, but as containing the best arguments that can be adduced on the subjects of which they treat.

6. Lord Castlereagh's able memoir on the Catholic claims.

On the Catholic question Lord Castlereagh observes:— "At the Revolution, the See of Rome was in full authority, and the unceasing efforts of the Catholic powers on the Continent were steadily and systematically directed to the establishment of Popery within these realms. Instead of a family on the throne attached to the principles of the Reformation, and to the preservation of the church establishment, we had a succession of princes playing the game of our enemies, aiming at absolute power, and favouring Popery as the instrument best suited to their purpose. To remedy the danger from the throne, the succession was altered; to defend the constitution, at a moment of struggle, from its enemies, numerous at home, and powerfully supported from abroad, the principle of exclusion, taken up at the Reformation was at the Revolution fortified; and in Ireland, where the danger was most pressing, it was followed up in Queen Anne's reign by every penal measure

7. His memoir on the Catholic claims.

CHAP. II.

1801.

which could be devised to break down the property, and of course to reduce the authority, of the Catholic body.

8. Continued.

"Circumstances have since so far altered as to induce a marked change of policy in the government of that branch of the empire, where Catholic authority can alone afford any reasonable ground of jealousy to the State. Not only all restrictions on the industry of that sect and their means of acquiring property have been taken off, but important constitutional privileges have been extended to them, in which the British Catholics have not been included. They now, therefore, are become a powerful body in the empire—in number not less than three millions—growing fast into wealth, and of course into local influence, and already in possession of a considerable proportion of political consequence. The question then is: Circumstanced as the empire is in wealth and population—circumstanced as it is with relation to the Continent, and united as it *now is* into one kingdom—can you safely permit their numbers and their property to work their natural effects in the usual channels of the constitution? Can you continue them precisely in their present predicament? Or have you the means of throwing them back to the point of depression they stood in at the commencement of the century?

9. Continued.

"The present state of things cannot be permanent in its nature; for so long as it is persevered in, that portion of the United Kingdom will be kept in a perpetual state of irritation and contest on a constitutional and religious question, whilst the party opposed to the State will every day be gaining authority in proportion as they acquire wealth, and, if we may judge from experience, rapidly gaining supporters amongst the Protestants themselves. If, then, the present arrangement is rather provisional than conclusive in itself, and if it is of all courses the worst, on a point so much calculated to excite the public feeling, to pursue a fluctuating and indefinite policy, what other system can be taken up? Can we, without a new struggle,

and a necessity more distinct and pressing than what at present exists, either justify in principle, or reconcile the Protestant body to inflict anew upon the Catholics the penalties and forfeitures which the temper of the times has so lately removed? or can we think it possible, in cool blood, to reduce them to their former poverty and weakness? And yet nothing else will enable us to act upon the principle of exclusion with any prospect even of temporary repose.

10. Continued.

"The Union being now accomplished, and the establishments of the empire being placed upon the natural support of a correspondent population, it is worth considering, so long as the Continental game is not played against us upon a religious principle, whether, in suffering the sectarian authority to operate *within* rather than without the constitution, the danger is not diminished? Should it be thought that the Dissenting interests of the empire at large (the Catholics being so admitted) have not weight, through their lawful operation, to shake the Establishment, there can be no question that, in a state of exclusion, they are more naturally open to an alliance with Jacobinism, the enemy of the present day, than in a state of comprehension. The Union has afforded us the means of trying this experiment with less risk than seems to attach to an opposite line of conduct. If it succeeds, it will relieve us from great embarrassment; if it fails, the evil will in time, as the accomplishment of Irish independence has already done, work out its own cure. The safety of the State must always rest upon the attachment of the great mass of its proprietors, who are attached to its establishments; and as it did at the Revolution, when the necessity is felt it will not fail to accomplish its own preservation. There is little chance of any Roman Catholic being called to his Majesty's counsels; if there was, a personal disability for office on account of *religion* is precisely the present ground of complaint, and is calculated to keep alive the same species of contest which

CHAP. II.

1801.

11. Continued.

it is our object to get rid of, and without an adequate motive.

"Should the measure of concession be decided on, the advantages of its proceeding from Government will naturally suggest themselves. Much benefit might arise from the boon being attributable to that settlement under which we are hereafter to live. It would make the Catholics in Ireland feel that their exclusion has been the necessary consequence of a separate constitution, and that their advantages have arisen out of an incorporation with Great Britain. It is idle to hope that Dissenters of any description can ever be so zealously attached subjects as those who are of the Established religion; but the question is, What system, without hazarding the powers of the State itself, is best calculated, if not warmly to attach, at least to disarm the hostility of, those classes in the community who cannot be got rid of, and must be governed? This latter consideration is of most pressing necessity with regard to Ireland. That kingdom must, in fact, be considered as a country of sectarists; and if we are to indulge an expectation that it may be redeemed from its present miseries, it must be by the adoption of some system which, without relaxing the energy of Government, shall relieve the public mind from its fundamental principles of perpetual struggle. Unless the power and stability of the united government shall afford the means in safety of adopting some means of compromise amongst the contending factions, the difficulty of governing the country will rapidly increase, as every year adds materially to the relative importance of the Dissenting interests. If the same internal struggle continues, Great Britain will derive little beyond an increase of expense from the Union. If she is to govern Ireland upon a garrison principle, perhaps, in abolishing the separate Parliament, she has parted as well with her most effectual means as with her most perfect justification. In uniting with Ireland, she has abdicated the colonial relation; and if, hereafter, that country is to

prove a resource rather than a burden to Great Britain, an effort must be made to govern it through the public mind.

12. Concluded.

"It is obvious that the government of Ireland has difficulties incidental to it, which will require a much greater proportion of Ministerial attention than Scotland did subsequent to the Union. Scotland at that day was thinly inhabited, the people poor and industrious, and of habits so peculiarly regular, that, with the exception of the two rebellions which sprang from a feeling of attachment to the exiled family, it may be said to have almost governed itself. Ireland, on the contrary, is highly populous; acquires wealth more rapidly than civilisation: it is inhabited by dissenters from the Establishment, split into factions, and those factions committed against each other, with all the rancour of past injuries as well as present distinctions. The law is imperfectly obeyed, and very ill administered by the magistrates, who are too frequently partisans rather than judges. In short, the tranquillity of the country is alone preserved, even in the degree in which it exists, by the perpetual intervention of the hand of Government, exercising the most summary powers. Gradually to correct these evils will require the persevering attention of a firm and impartial Government. The Union has removed a great impediment to a better system; but the Union will do little in itself unless it be followed up. In addition to the steady application of authority in support of the laws, I look to the measure which is the subject of the above observations, to an arrangement of tithes, and to a provision for the Catholic and Dissenting clergy, calculated in its regulations to bring them under the influence of the State, as essentially necessary to mitigate, if it cannot extinguish, faction, to place the Established Church on its most secure foundation, and to give the necessary authority as well as stability to the Government itself."[1]

[1] Castlereagh Corresp. iv. 394-400.

Nothing can paint the peculiar type of Lord Castlereagh's mind more clearly than this memoir. He had just

CHAP. II.

1801.

been engaged in a strenuous effort to procure for the Catholics the liberation from restriction for which he here contends, and he had been unsuccessful in the attempt.

13. Which was eminently characteristic of Lord Castlereagh.

He had lost office in consequence; and from the known and insurmountable repugnance of the Sovereign to the measure, he had to all appearance forfeited his whole hopes of political advancement in the endeavour. In the first moments of disappointed hope and blasted ambition, he sits down to write a calm statesmanlike paper on the subject, which he submits in private to the Government, and which is for the first time brought to light long after his death, when his private documents come to be examined by his biographer! He neither makes it the subject of invective on the hustings, nor of declamation in the newspapers, nor of debate in Parliament. His observations are among the very best, his reasonings the most conclusive, that ever have been made on this vexed and oft-debated subject; but having addressed them to what he deemed the proper quarter, he is content to let them slumber in forgotten obscurity in his repositories. Calm and passionless in this his first great disappointment in life, he exhibited neither the irritation of thwarted political ambition nor the rancour of excited religious intolerance. He views the question, in its practical and political aspect, as deeply affecting the strength and security of the empire, without a vestige of the animosity with which it was at the time debated on both sides by others. He sums up the arguments and delivers his opinion with the temper and moderation of a judge on the bench—not the zeal of a party to the suit, or the vehemence of an advocate at the bar.

14. His views for the adjustment of tithes.

A general plan for the commutation or adjustment of tithes, so as to avoid the evils arising from their being drawn in kind by a Protestant incumbent from the Catholic parishioners, strongly attracted the attention of Lord Castlereagh. This was a perpetual source of irritation and contention in Ireland; for although, from the extreme

smallness of the holdings, seldom exceeding a few acres, into which the country was divided, the payment in general was a perfect trifle, seldom exceeding a shilling, often requiring two or three holdings to be massed together to amount to *twopence*, yet this was as nothing as regarded the irritation with which its collection was attended. The importance attached by those engaged in them, in religious disputes, is almost always not in the direct but the inverse ratio of the weight of the interest or question really at stake. Aware of this, and a spectator of the many painful disputes, often ending in blood, which the drawing of tithes by the Protestant clergy occasioned, Lord Castlereagh turned his anxious attention to this subject, and prepared an elaborate memorial on it which has fortunately been preserved among the Castlereagh papers. His plan was to have the amount of tithes in each parish ascertained, either by private arrangement, arbitration, or judicial authority, and this being done, to lay it as a direct burden on the landlord. This was exactly the system adopted in 1631 in Scotland, by Charles I.; but it had been then found to be attended with the serious inconvenience, not foreseen at the time, that the fixed *money* payment became in progress of time, from the fall in the value of the precious metals consequent on the discovery of South America, to be much below, often not a third of, the value of the tithes abandoned. To guard against this danger Lord Castlereagh proposed to introduce a principle which "shall give the Church, at proper intervals, a fair advance in proportion to the improvement in other incomes;" and for this purpose he desired to have the average value of the arable land in each parish ascertained at stated intervals by valuation by proper officers or the tax-office returns, and the proportion due to the Church fixed according to such valuation. Such was Lord Castlereagh's plan, which has been only partially carried out by subsequent legislation;[1] but which contains, it may

[1] Castlereagh Corresp. iv. 193-213.

CHAP. II.

1801.

safely be affirmed, the only just and practicable mode of adjusting the rights of parties in this vexed and difficult question.*

15. Returns relating to the Roman Catholic clergy.

A general plan for the establishment of the Roman Catholic clergy and their connection with the State, by granting salaries from Government to the bishops and priests of that establishment, had, long before his resignation of office, occupied the attention of Lord Castlereagh. With this view he prepared and sent round to every diocese and parish in the kingdom queries which brought in very valuable returns as to the condition of the clergy of that persuasion in the country. From them it appeared that there were at that time (1800) 1800 Roman Catholic clergymen in the country, of whom 1400 were secular and 400 regular. The benefices were 1026, and each required two incumbents, though by no means the whole of them had it. There were 4 archbishops and 21 bishops. The highest income was that of the Bishop of Cork, which was £550 a-year: the lowest that of the Bishop of Kilfenora, which was £100 a-year. The average incomes of the bishops was £300 a-year: of the parish priests, £65 a-year. The highest was £240 a-year: the lowest, £15 a-year. The clergy dined on an average half the year in private houses.[1] The incomes both of the bishops and clergy, secular and regular, were derived

[1] Castlereagh Corresp. iv. 97-99.

* Lord Castlereagh thought that, without going through all this operation of arbitrations, valuations, and judicial authority, the whole question might be settled by an imposition at once of an assessment of a shilling an acre on all improved, arable, pasture, meadow, and wood lands of the kingdom. Taking the whole acres in the country at 15,000,000, and two-thirds of that, or 10,000,000, as the improved and assessable portion, this would yield to the Church an income of £50,000 a-year above what it at that time enjoyed, which might stand against bad debts and the expense of collection. This, said he, "would be light in operation, but productive in effect. It would be a relief to the poor, and an encouragement to agriculture. It would still draw the support of the Church from the soil, to which immemorial prescription had confined it, but it would draw it in a more equitable proportion. It would remove a monstrous burden from the industry of the husbandman and the shoulders of the peasantry, not to impose it on the manufacturers of stock, but to deal out a reasonable share of it to them."—LORD CASTLEREAGH'S *Memoir on Tithes*; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, iv. 212.

entirely from marriage-licences, christenings, burials, and chapel contributions; no part from tithes or territorial possessions.

16. His plan for endowing the clergy.

To remedy this glaring inequality, and put a period, at least to a certain degree, to the entire dependence of the clergy of all grades upon their flocks, Lord Castlereagh proposed to settle upon them all a certain income from Government in proportion to their rank, from £750 to the archbishop, to £25 to the least provided of the parish priests. The average payment to the parochial clergy was to have been £40 a-year—about the income paid by the State to the parochial clergy in France. The sum to be allotted to these payments was £212,000 a-year. The object of this payment was not to encourage the Roman Catholic faith, or render the clergy of that establishment independent of their flocks, but simply to acquire a certain hold over them, to elevate in some degree the class of persons who might enter the church, and to counteract the close alliance between the parish priests and their flocks, which necessarily arose from the former being entirely dependent upon the latter. This plan has been never yet carried into effect: and it is still strongly opposed by many conscientious persons, on the principle that it is wrong to contribute to the support of a delusive and pernicious species of faith. But there can be no doubt that, in a political point of view, it was highly expedient, and it is a lasting subject of regret that it has not been adopted; and if a particular faith, though open to exception, is found irrevocably established in the majority of a country, the best thing that can be done is to connect it with the Government and render it as little hurtful as possible.[1]

[1] Castlereagh Corresp. iii. 141-158, iv. 400.

17. Lord Castlereagh's memoir on the Defence of Ireland.

The defence of Ireland against foreign invasion also engaged the anxious attention of Lord Castlereagh, even after he ceased to be officially connected with it, especially after the threatening aspect of foreign affairs in the latter part of the peace of Amiens rendered a renewal of the

CHAP. II. 1801.

war with France probable. He began with a very important observation, of application at all, and especially at the present time. "It is a common observation amongst historians that a powerful invasion of an insular state is generally successful; and, if a judgment may be formed from the history of England, the observation is by no means unfounded. The reason, I think, is obvious: such a state trusts to keeping its enemies at a distance, and is unprepared at home; it is assailable on all sides—is generally unprovided with fortresses; and, from the necessity of guarding various points of probable attack at the same time, the distribution of its forces must render the collective operation of them at the moment most favourable for resistance impracticable. Ireland, it is true, seems to differ in one material circumstance from the description of state to which this observation applies: she has powerful protection to expect from the forces of a great empire of which she forms a part. But I rather think that even this advantage may be found insufficient to counterbalance the disadvantages of her insular situation in her present state of defence; and a very few words may be sufficient to show that the chief circumstances of strength and security on which the other great division of the empire may with confidence rely, may prove inadequate to the defence of Ireland.

18. Continued.

"The navy of the empire is justly considered as the safeguard or bulwark of England; but the confidence thus reposed in it must necessarily have reference to the internal situation of the country: the determined hostility which an invading army would *there* experience from the people in every quarter would render an open communication between it and the Continent indispensably necessary. The invasion, then, of England, would not be attempted without a superiority at sea. In Ireland no such necessity would exist. An invading army, capable of opposing the force to be spared from the protection of the different provinces against insur-

rection would not find reinforcements or supplies from the Continent necessary: disaffection would abundantly furnish both. It would indeed, I fear, find itself exposed to but few of the difficulties attendant on operations in an enemy's country; and it might attain its object without a superiority at sea. This marked difference in situation between the two countries, whether disregarded or not by us, has certainly not been overlooked by France. She has long considered Ireland as the vulnerable part of the empire, and would inevitably have proved it so, had not her efforts for the purpose been in some instances frustrated by chance, and in others crippled by scantiness of means. However, it should be considered that, although she has hitherto found great difficulty in raising troops sufficient for her various enterprises, she may now be glad to engage in any enterprise in which she can find employment for her troops. It would be idle to indulge a hope that we are exempt from the danger of a future rebellion because the last was in the course of a few months suppressed. It is true we are not threatened with any appearance of insurrection at the present time, but it is equally true that the great mass of our population is disaffected to the Government; and where public security rests on so combustible a base, an accidental spark may at any time produce a destructive explosion. Upon the whole, I think it cannot be denied that, if there be a country on earth in which precautionary measures of every sort against external and internal enemies are indispensably necessary, Ireland is that country; and if ever there was a period in which such measures would seem to be peculiarly requisite, the present is that period.

19. Continued.

"Let us see, then, whether precautionary measures essential to the security of the country have not hitherto been neglected, and in what manner the neglect may be remedied. First, as to fortresses: So destitute are we of places of strength of any description, that even our

CHAP. II. 1801.

depots throughout the kingdom would, in the event of invasion, probably fall into the enemy's hands, or be surprised by the rebels, at the moment when the use of them would become indispensably necessary; that is, when our disposable force should be ordered from its present stations, where it affords them protection, to form an army in the field. The capital I consider as in a peculiar degree insecure. An attempt to defend it would be vain, and to command it without a citadel would be impracticable. The public and private treasure in the National Bank, amounting to above a million in specie alone, the ordnance, small arms, and stores of every description, would offer a temptation to sudden insurrection scarcely to be resisted by the rebels, when co-operating with an invading enemy; and the advantage of seizing the persons conducting the executive government, securing them as hostages, or compelling them to seek safety by flight, would be too obvious to be overlooked. It would, indeed, reduce the loyal inhabitants in general to the necessity of submitting without resistance.

20. Continued.

"Immense sums have been expended, in the course of the last few years, in the purchase of houses for the accommodation of the troops, as well as in building barracks; but it unfortunately happens that these barracks are in general situated in large towns, where the fidelity of the troops is liable to be tampered with. The situations chosen, too, are commonly such as preclude all possibility of erecting defences round them with effect, should the yeomen and other loyal inhabitants find it necessary to resort to them for security, in the event of the troops stationed in them taking the field. Indeed they are in general so completely commanded, that assailants would have the advantage in point of situation over troops attempting their defence. The fashion of the present day, I know, is to decry fortifications in general, whether justly or not is immaterial to the present subject; for opinions may be right in the

abstract and absurd in the application. Had the Emperor Joseph lived, however, he would have lamented having yielded to an opinion of their inutility; and the business of St Jean d'Acre, as well as the defence which Alexandria has enabled the French to make in Egypt, affords an argument in favour of their being sometimes useful. I will readily admit that fortresses would be of no use in England; but this admission leads me into another comparison of the circumstances of the two countries. *There*, as I have said, there is no real danger of invasion; *here*, it may be expected almost every hour: *there*, the mass of the people wish to uphold the Government, and have not any idea of insurrection; *here*, the majority of them wish to pull it down, and think of nothing else: *there*, the army may live among the people without danger of corruption; *here*, the efforts to corrupt it have been incessant, and our security rests in a great measure on keeping them apart. An attempt might as well be made to convert a thistle into a productive corn-stem, as a real Irish Jacobin into a loyal subject; although, certainly, in process of time, when a considerable part of the present generation shall have passed away, the prevailing national propensity may, by means of the Union, be changed.

"The erecting of great fortresses, and the fortifying of large towns, I am aware, would be enormously expensive, and would require a great length of time to accomplish. Citadels, however, and other places of moderate extent, would not be subject to these objections, and might be of incalculable service. One of these, in the vicinity of Dublin, I conceive to be indispensably necessary; and one or more in each of the other provinces I should think equally requisite. Perhaps strong lines or field-works, enclosing temporary barracks, might be erected with effect; and might, in the first instance, answer for any immediate exigency; these might, as time and circumstances should permit, be strengthened and converted

CHAP. II. 1801.

into fortresses. This idea of field-works, however, I hazard without much consideration. In choosing situations for fortresses, I take for granted a communication with the sea, or with the great rivers navigable to it, would be the first object of attention. Everything at the commencement of a campaign would depend on gaining time, and on keeping up the means of communication with England. In Continental wars, in general, each army has a friendly country to retreat to. Here, in our present state of defence, a single defeat might leave to us only the alternative of submission or inevitable destruction. In short, I am persuaded so much depends on establishing safe assembling and retreating posts communicating with England, that, destitute of them, the country may be lost without a struggle; and by means of them, even if lost for a time, it might, and I trust would, be recovered. I assume the proposition that Ireland would be fought for by England to the last extremity; for it is pretty generally admitted, that if one country were to fall the other could not stand; indeed, a powerful French-Irish army, within a few hours' sail in open boats of the British shore, would be a circumstance requiring a very strong heart, and at the same time a very weak head, to contemplate with indifference."[1] *

[1] Castlereagh Corresp. iv. 339-351.

22. Renewed insurrection.

An event occurred in Ireland after Lord Castlereagh had ceased to be connected officially with it, which proved on what a slippery foundation the public security at that time rested, and how well-founded were his apprehensions of the probable effects of a considerable invasion by French troops. Although the country as a whole was tranquil, there were some ardent spirits in the capital who were far from being appeased, and the zeal of whom brought about an attempt at rebellion, which, though in itself contemptible, so far as the means at their disposal were concerned, proved not a little formidable

* This memoir, though not signed by Lord Castlereagh, evidently developed his views, and was drawn up by his authority.

from the revelation which it afforded of the narrow basis on which the Government, even in the metropolis, rested. In July 1803, secret information was given to the Government that an insurrection in Dublin was in preparation; and an explosion, which suddenly took place on the 16th of that month, in the public streets, the authors of which were shrouded in mystery, told but too plainly that the collection and transmission of ammunition for that purpose were going forward. The garrison of the city consisted of 3000 men—a force perfectly adequate to put down any attempt at open rebellion; but it appeared, from what followed, that there was a deplorable want of vigour and unity in the manner in which the civil and military authority was directed. The rising was determined on the night of the 22d, and at two in the morning of the 23d, the Kildare leaders, deeming the chance of success hopeless, left the city. The insurgents, however, whose numbers never exceeded 300, assembled, took possession of Thomas Street and James Street, and sent out detachments in different directions to rouse the inhabitants. The troops in the garrison were under orders to hold themselves in readiness; but there was no one who undertook the responsibility of assembling or leading them against the centre of the insurrection; and few of the yeomanry had arms, and none of them ammunition. Meanwhile the greatest alarm prevailed at the Castle, for the protection of which—besides the usual guard, at all times sufficiently strong—the 2d Regiment, 600 strong, under Major Donnellan, was brought from the old Custom-House, where it had been quartered; but no attempt was for a considerable time made to attack the rebels in the centre of their strength. At length, about eleven o'clock, a party of the 21st, escorting an officer of the regiment from his lodgings to the barracks, fell in with part of the mob in Thomas Street, and being attacked, instantly fired and dispersed them. The fugitives received a volley from the guard on the Coombe in their flight, and imme-

July 16, 1803.

July 22.

CHAP. II. 1803.

diately dispersed. The troops from the barracks, however, *did not receive any orders to march till ten at night*, and did not appear in the street till half-past one on the morning of the 24th, two hours before which time the insurgents had been entirely dispersed.[1] The rising was put down, not by any concerted measure emanating from a government having 3000 soldiers at its disposal, but by a few discharges by detachments or escorts which accidentally met the insurgents in the streets![1]

[1] Mr Marsden's account of the insurrection; Castlereagh Corresp. iv. 316-323.

23. Death of Chief-Justice Kilwarden.

A deplorable catastrophe has thrown a melancholy interest over this abortive and contemptible attempt at insurrection. During the short time that the mob were in possession of the central parts of the city, and sending out parties in different directions to excite the inhabitants to insurrection, one of these parties accidentally met Lord Chief-Justice Kilwarden's carriage, who was returning through Thomas Street from the country, accompanied by his daughter. The judge announced his name, and begged for mercy; but his age and character, and the tears of his daughter, were alike unable to soften the hearts of those fiends in human form. They dragged him from the vehicle, declaring that they must have his life, but that they would spare the lady. She was allowed to pass uninjured through the column, but the unresisting nobleman, and a relative with him, were assailed with clubs and pikes—the savages violently contending, as in Paris during the massacres of September 1792, for the distinction of stabbing their passive victims. The young lady, in the utmost agony, made her way to the Castle, and related the terrible adventure; and, meanwhile, some humane persons having arrived at the scene of the murder, found Mr Wolfe, his lordship's friend, lying dead on the pavement, and Lord Kilwarden stretched beside him, but still breathing. He was carried to the nearest watch-house, where he expired in great agony in half an hour. A by-

stander, shocked at the scene, exclaimed that the murderers should be executed next day. Rallying his strength at these words, the dying judge exclaimed: "Murder must be punished; but let no man suffer for my death but on a fair trial and by the laws of his country." With these words he expired.[1]

[1] Castlereagh Corresp. iv. 275-278.

24. Trial and execution of Emmett.

The author and instigator of this insane attempt at rebellion was Robert Emmett, a young man who possessed that mixture of ardour, sanguine disposition, and enthusiasm, so often found in conspirators, and which prompts them to engage in the most desperate enterprises without the smallest calculation of the proportion which their means bear to the end they have in view. In conjunction with one Russell, a religious enthusiast, a bricklayer, a woollen manufacturer, and another desperado named Redmond, a man in extreme poverty, he formed the design of subverting the Government, and separating Ireland from Great Britain! The whole arsenal of the conspirators consisted of a few thousand pikes, a quantity of gunpowder, hand-grenades, and military dresses, with eight thousand copies of a proclamation, wet from the press, calling on the people to rise and establish a provisional government! Passing at once, as is so often the case in similar circumstances, from the extremity of confidence to the depths of despair, Emmett and his associates fled on the insurrection being put down, and with so little precaution to prevent the discovery of their depot, that it was found out by Lieutenant Coultman of the 9th, who, with twelve men, made himself master of the whole. Emmett escaped to the mountains of Kildare; but he was tracked by the police, returned to Dublin, and was there seized, condemned, and executed with Russell. The other conspirators, too contemptible for notice, were pardoned. With them terminated this abortive and feeble attempt at rebellion, which would not deserve any notice, even in biography,[2] were it not for the proof it affords of the insecure basis on which the public safety at that time

[2] Castlereagh Corresp. iv. 266-270; Ann. Reg. 1803, 311-312.

CHAP. II. 1802.

rested in Ireland, and the contrast it exhibits to the vigour and capacity with which, under the administration of Lord Camden and Lord Castlereagh, a rebellion tenfold more serious had been fronted and put down.*

25. Lord Castlereagh's appointment as President of the Board of Control. July 17, 1802.

The great capacity of Lord Castlereagh, and in particular the high estimation in which he was held, both by Mr Pitt and Lord Cornwallis, as well as all the members of Mr Addington's Administration, led to his being offered, in July 1802, the situation of President of the Board of Control by that Government. As it was unconnected with Ireland or the Catholic question, the offer was accepted; and on 17th July 1802, he kissed hands on his appointment to that elevated office with a seat in the Cabinet. This promotion made a total and immediate change in his objects in life and subjects of thought, and brought him for the first time on the destined theatre of his usefulness and his glory. Removed at once from the various but important and engrossing concerns of a part, he was put in contact with the necessities of the whole empire; and his seat in the Cabinet brought under his immediate notice, not merely the interests, in themselves sufficiently great, of our Eastern dominions, but the entire state of Europe, then in one of the most important crises of its history. From this time forward his main attention was directed to foreign affairs; and his bio-

* Among the strange effusions of Emmett's disordered imagination was found, in the magazine of the conspirators' arms, beside the proclamation for a provisional government, the following paper:—"I have little time to look at the thousand difficulties which still lie between me and the completion of my wishes. That these difficulties will disappear, I have ardent and, I trust, rational hope; but if it is not to be the case, I thank God for having gifted me with a sanguine disposition. To that disposition I run from reflection; and if my hopes are without foundation—if a precipice is opening under my feet from which duty will not suffer me to run back—I am grateful for that sanguine disposition which leads me to the brink, and throws me down, while my eyes are still raised to the vision of happiness that my fancy formed in the heavens."—*Castlereagh Correspondence*, iv. 266. The spirit of resolution, like all other ardent passions when carried to excess, borders on insanity, and often runs into it; but it is only on that account the more dangerous, for it prompts men to engage in enterprises which sometimes prove successful, from their very absurdity having caused no precautions to be taken against them.

graphy becomes the diplomatic history of Europe, down to the period of his death, twenty years afterwards.

1802.

At the time when Lord Castlereagh entered the Cabinet as President of the Board of Control, the affairs of Great Britain were in the most critical situation, and all the wisdom of the statesman was most required to guide with safety the vessel of the State through the shoals with which it was surrounded. The definitive treaty with France had been signed on the 27th March preceding; but it was felt by the Government, and indeed obvious to all Europe, that the pacification was but a truce, and that the seeds of a future and still more serious war had been already sown in the very conditions with which the peace was accompanied. In possession of what she had already begun to call her "natural limits," that is, of the whole territory included between the Rhine, the Alps, and the ocean—with the forts in Flanders, the basis of aggressive war in Germany, and the passes of Savoy, the keys of Italy, in her hand—France was already much stronger than any State of Europe taken singly; and it was evident, from experience, that such were the difficulties of getting the Continental powers to draw together, that nothing but a long series of disasters could still their jealousies, or produce a real coalition for their common independence. Malta, the strongest fortress and most important station in the Mediterranean, was itself an apple of discord, which it was obvious must ere long lead to a renewal of hostilities—for we were bound by the treaty to abandon it at no very distant period; and yet how could this be done with any security for Egypt, and with it our whole Eastern dominions? The views of the First Consul on that important "midway station" were scarcely disguised; and his menacing attitude to the Swiss cantons proved that Europe not less than the East was threatened by his ambition. Yet, was Great Britain singly to renew the conflict, and plunge a nation just beginning to taste the blessings of

26. Critical situation of Great Britain at this time,

CHAP. II.

1802.

peace into a new war, probably longer, more exhausting, and more bloody than the one which had just been concluded?

27. And of India.

If the position of Great Britain at home was critical, still more perilous was the situation of our Eastern dominions. In truth, the state of affairs was there so hazardous that any post might bring intelligence of a decisive and fatal nature. Already that system of conquest and annexation had been begun by the British in Hindostan which, though often disclaimed at home and forbidden by the East India Directors, has been always forced upon their viceroys abroad by the necessities of their situation, and seems to be the condition of existence to an alien domination founded on foreign or domestic conquest. One acquisition had rendered unavoidable, and in a manner forced on, another, in Hindostan as in Europe, until it had become evident that the career of conquest could be stopped only in the one by the Himalaya, in the other by the polar snows. Already, by treaty signed on September 6, 1801, a large part of the kingdom of Oude, including the rich alluvial plain of the Doab between the Jumna and the Ganges, containing 32,000 square miles, had been ceded to the British; and in consequence of the discovery, in the archives of Tippoo at Seringapatam, of decisive evidence of the hostile designs of the Nawab of the Carnatic, his heir had been compelled to cede 27,000 more to the East India Company. These great stretches, which established the English power in a solid manner in the centre of Hindostan, and on the high-road from Calcutta to Delhi, had excited the utmost alarm in India, and given rise to a close alliance of the powerful Mahratta states to expel the presumptuous strangers from the peninsula, who threatened soon to lord it over all its native and legitimate rulers. This formidable confederacy, which could bring 200,000 well-trained horsemen into the field, might soon be expected to be on the hands of the Company,

Sept. 6, 1801.

July 31.

with whom the contest would be one of life or death. The conflict was already imminent, and preparations were making for it on both sides, when Lord Castlereagh was appointed to the head of the Board of Control in July 1802. And thus, by a singular coincidence, and yet the result of the same general causes in both instances, he found himself at the same time called on to prepare resistance to the career of aggressive ambition in Europe, and moderate its excesses or secure its acquisitions in Asia. Nor were the intermediate states in a less critical position, or less requiring the vigilant eye of the Eastern statesman. The Turkish empire, threatened at once by the Muscovites on the north, and the great rebellion of the Wahabee in Arabia on the south, seemed on the point of dissolution; and the Persians, hard pressed by the Russians, who had surmounted the Caucasus and were besieging Erivan, promised soon to cease to be the barrier of Hindostan, and rather become the advanced post of the Cabinet of St Petersburg against our much-coveted Eastern dominions.

1802.

28. His memoir on the relations of France and England in 1802.

The most urgent of these various and complicated questions then pressing for consideration, was the state of our relations with France: and Lord Castlereagh's views regarding it at this period are the more important from his close and cordial intimacy with Mr Pitt, then on the neutral benches, and unfettered either by the obligations of cabinets or the aspirations of opposition. They were thus expressed in a secret memoir, drawn up by him, and laid before the Cabinet shortly after the conclusion of the definitive treaty of peace with France; and his words, prophetic of the future, are applicable to other times than those which followed the peace of Amiens: "Unless we are prepared almost to invite fresh encroachments by our tameness and apparent insensibility, we ought, without menace in respect to the future, or even too strong a tone in respect to the past, which is to be avoided if we are not prepared to resist

CHAP. II. 1802.

what has taken place, fairly to give France to understand that, although we have made many sacrifices for peace, amongst which we reckon our acquiescence in the changes in question, we cannot submit beyond a certain point; and that, if she entertains the same desire of peace which we feel, she must abstain from encroachments which tend to alter both her maritime and continental relations with the other powers of Europe. Connected with this, some strong naval and military establishments, and a vigorous system of finance, are as indispensable to give even to the peace we have concluded any chance of permanence as they are essential to our safety, in the event of hostilities being suddenly recommenced. And the frame of our establishments should be so contrived as to admit of a rapid extension at the outset of the war, so as to place us at once in security at home, whilst we are enabled to reap the full fruits of our maritime superiority in striking an early blow against the colonies of the enemy. In addition to making France feel, in our communications, how necessary moderation is on her part to the preservation of peace, we ought to adopt a vigilant system of conduct on the Continent, with a view of accelerating as far as we can the adjustment of those arrangements (viz., the indemnities) which alienate the several powers of the [German] empire, in particular, from each other. We ought to endeavour to bring them, if possible, to understand each other; to watch in concert the operations of the French Government; and to be prepared to make a common effort for their own preservation, if the encroaching policy of France should leave them no other alternative."[1] *

[1] Lord Castlereagh's Memoir in 1802; Castlereagh Corresp. v. 29, 30.

* Such were Lord Castlereagh's ideas in 1802, while still at peace with France, and just entering on his career as a statesman in connection with that country. It is interesting to observe how identical they are with those of the Duke of Wellington expressed in 1832, when the *entente cordiale* with that country was at its height. "The union between France and England," says he, "is calculated to preserve peace at the moment, but not in the end. Our rulers have been cajoled by the French King. The objects of the French alliance are *exclusively French*. It tends not merely to the establishment of French

29. Negotiations previous to renewal of the war. 1803.

The negotiations which led to the rupture of the peace of Amiens in 1803 were among the most important and delicate in which a British Government was ever engaged, not only on account of the vast interests at stake in the issue, but also from the circumstance, unusual at least in the European transactions of Great Britain, that in form, though not in substance, we were in the wrong. By the terms of the preliminary articles Malta was to be restored to the Knights of the Order of St John of Jerusalem, to whom it had belonged before its conquest by the French, and placed under the guarantee of a third neutral power; and Russia had been chosen by the contracting parties to undertake this serious responsibility. France summoned England, soon after the preliminaries were signed, to make good this engagement, and restore this important fortress to the Knights. The conduct of the First Consul, however, in the interim, had been so aggressive, that the British Government with reason declined to make the required cession; and Russia, glad of a pretext for escaping from the perilous guarantee, made such difficulties about undertaking it as were equivalent to a refusal. Napoleon invaded and conquered Switzerland without the shadow of a pretext; and General Sebastiani was sent by him into Egypt to make inquiries, which terminated in a report published in the *Moniteur*, evidently pointing to a reoccupation of that country by the arms of France. This led to representations and complaints on the part of our Government, which soon assumed an angry character. Lord Castlereagh's opinion, given in confidence

influence, but of French rule and supremacy. We cannot dissolve it but at the risk of a war, and that, too, a war as costly as the last, without its chances of ultimate success. The object of France is dominion to be acquired by any means, *but especially by fomenting disturbances in foreign nations;* ours ought to be to keep all other nations independent of France. Since every measure adopted in consequence of our alliance with France must be inconsistent with our interests, the peace which that alliance gives us is hollow; and if terminated suddenly, as it probably might be, the more unexpectedly that event should occur the more disastrous must be the war which would ensue on its rupture."—DUKE OF WELLINGTON *to* MR RAIKES, *November* 14, 1832; *Raikes's Diary*, i. 162.

CHAP. II. 1803.

to the Cabinet, was a model of political wisdom, characterised by that mixture of firmness and moderation which distinguished all his political measures.*

30. His memorandum to the Cabinet on the negotiation with France.

The progress of this angry negotiation, and the increasing subjects of difficulty which it came to embrace, from the continued encroachments, in one direction or another, of the First Consul, brought Lord Castlereagh, when a Cabinet Minister, still closer in contact with the diplomatic intercourse of the two countries. It is curious to observe how easily his master-mind caused itself to be felt in the public affairs of the State, and how entirely, within a few months of his obtaining a seat in the Cabinet, while still holding only the office of President of the Board of Control, he took the lead even on the most intricate points of European politics. It is not less remarkable how clearly he seized the salient point of the question, and the mingled temper and judgment with

* "Upon the whole, I see the possible and probable advantage of a distinct pledge not to submit to further encroachment on the part of France, inasmuch as it may determine her not to make the attempt. At the same time, I cannot but hesitate, where so much is at stake, and where everything may alternately hinge upon a question of time and resources rather than any effort of arms, in taking a step which may plunge us again singly in a war, without any other means of offence against France than those which touch her colonies, a species of attack which but remotely affects her present power, and is in itself inadequate to shake the sources of her authority and the stability of her military empire, whilst it bears much more severely upon our resources than it does upon hers. I am the more disposed to act with caution on this point (though I am by no means prepared to say it may not be wise), because I do entertain, in the event of its not having the effect of deterring France from her purpose, very great doubts as to the mode and time which ought to be chosen for renewing the contest. . . . What I desire is, that France should feel that Great Britain cannot be trifled with, at the same time that I should wish to leave the line of conduct which ought to be pursued upon circumstances as they arise entirely open; and I should prefer explaining myself, both to France and the Continental powers, in private communications rather than by a parliamentary pledge. Whether anything has been said to France with reference to her late encroachment in the course of the negotiation, I know not; but I should think, now the peace is concluded, that we ought to explain ourselves very frankly with respect to our general desire of peace, provided her system was such as to permit us to adhere to it; and I should think it doubly necessary, if there is any reason to apprehend that Buonaparte has similar views with respect to Holland with those which were realised at Lyons with regard to the Cisalpine Republic."—LORD CASTLEREAGH'S *Memorandum, July* 1802; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, v. 3 6, 37.

which he proposed to combat and come to issue with the First Consul on the real point at issue between the parties—viz., the occupation of Malta. "I am inclined to think," said he, in a memorandum addressed to the Cabinet, "the battle ought still to be fought on the proposition before transmitted—namely, the permanent occupation of Malta; qualifying it, if any facility arises therefrom, by leaving the Order in possession of the civil government of the island. To act up to principle, as laid down in former despatches, I think we must insist upon permanent possession of a naval station. . . . My opinion is, that with Malta for seven years, Lampedosa for ever, Holland and Switzerland evacuated, and the Turkish empire and Naples under the avowed protection of Russia, if not formally guaranteed by her, you would stand well at home, and well with reference to France, provided you have obtained suitable reparation on the two points affecting the honour of the country. . . . Lord Whitworth,* therefore, should be recalled to this ultimatum, and ordered to come away, in case he should not be able immediately to sign an arrangement substantially on the basis of that proposition." This ultimatum, it is well known, was presented without success; and in Lord Castlereagh's Papers is a very curious account of the famous ebullition of wrath by the First Consul, which completely justified the British Government in their determination, with the declared views of Buonaparte, not to part with Malta.[1]†

[1] Lord Castlereagh's memorandum; Castlereagh Corresp. v. 43-48.

* The plenipotentiary at Paris.

† "Buonaparte sent for Lord Whitworth, told him that we must evacuate Malta or it was war, talked of invasion, &c.; and in the course of his conversation, although he denied any immediate wish to go to Egypt at the risk of war, avowed that it was an object France could not lose sight of, and that sooner or later it must belong to her, either by the consent of the Turkish Government, or by the dissolution and dismemberment of the Ottoman empire.

"Upon the receipt of this communication we recurred to our former grounds of [complaint], which the French Government had studiously endeavoured to pass and evade; adhered to our former declaration of not entering into further discussion relative to the evacuation of Malta till we had received the explanation and satisfaction we desired; and added, that after the distinct avowal made by the First Consul of the ulterior views of the French Government in respect to Egypt, in confirmation of the many causes of suspicion and jealousy

CHAP. II.

1803.

31. Grounds stated by Lord Castlereagh for renewing the war. 1803.

The grounds for renewing the war in 1803 were stated by Lord Castlereagh in a minute addressed to the Cabinet, which was adopted by the Ministers, and made the reasons for justifying that step. This minute we present in a condensed form. Between the preliminaries and the definitive treaty Buonaparte put himself at the head of the Italian Republic, annexed the island of Elba to France, and it then became known that Spain had ceded Louisiana to France. Notwithstanding these, the treaty was ratified; but it was then declared that peace could not last if the conduct of France was such as it had been since the signature of the preliminaries. The same state of things continued from the ratification of the treaty to the representation from Switzerland; and during this period the British Government was animated by a sincere desire to execute the treaty. This was manifested in their acquiescing in the mode of election of the Grand Master of Malta, in their reception of the Neapolitan troops and General Vial, in their restoring French subjects to all privileges within the country, and putting their commerce on the footing of other foreign nations. On the other hand, the conduct of France showed no signs of moderation. Her troops continued to occupy Holland in breach of the treaty of Amiens; Piedmont was annexed to France without the condition in the treaty as to a suitable indemnity being provided to Sardinia being fulfilled; Parma and Placentia were claimed by France under a secret article with Spain; the Government of Portugal was insulted by General Lannes, and the dismissal of D'Almeida insisted on by France; Switzerland was ultimately told that, if she did not submit to the will of the First Consul, a French army would enter the country.[1] Nor was the direct conduct of France towards

[1] Lord Castlereagh's memorandum on the renewal of the war; Castlereagh Corresp. v. 62-69.

before existing, we could not avoid requiring some substantial security against those views; and that we conceived it would be difficult, if not impossible, to find any security that could be deemed satisfactory other than the military occupation of Malta."—*Detached Memorandum by* LORD CASTLEREAGH; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, v. 50.

this country more calculated to inspire confidence. Sequestrations were not taken off British property in conformity with the treaty; prohibitions against the imports of British produce continued as during the war; British vessels were detained, and no redress given; angry representations made with respect to the press and French emigrants in this country; and libels published in the *Moniteur* directly levelled at the British Government.

32. Lord Castlereagh's early intimacy and cordiality with Lord Wellesley.

The position of Lord Castlereagh in the Cabinet, the head of the Board of Control, brought him immediately in contact with Lord Wellesley, then exercising the high and responsible duties of Governor-General in India. The period when this intercourse began, as already noticed, was the most critical one which had yet occurred in our Eastern annals, when the regulation of the recently ceded districts of Oude and the Carnatic was in progress, and the great Mahratta confederacy was forming, which it required the whole firmness of the Governor-General, aided by the military talents of his brother, General Wellesley, then unknown to fame, and of General (afterwards Lord) Lake, to withstand. In these critical circumstances, Lord Wellesley had much need of the active support and ardent co-operation of the President of the Board of Control to aid him in his arduous undertaking: nor were either awanting. From the very first there sprang up the most cordial feeling and intimacy between him and Lord Castlereagh; and on every occasion the latter rendered him all the assistance in his power, both in supporting his projects and shielding him from the shortsighted and dangerous interference on many occasions of the East India Directors. He gave proof in the very outset of the disinterested principles on which he had determined to discharge his duties at the Board of Control, by declining all patronage connected with his office, which he left exclusively to the Governor-General. The first correspondence between these two great men is not the least interesting point in the biogra-

CHAP. II. 1802.

phy of both; and it becomes doubly important in a general point of view, as it first brought Lord Castlereagh into contact with General Wellesley, and led to that high estimation of his talents which ended in his appointing him to the command of the British army in the Peninsula.*

In those days, in the beginning of the century, the only communication with India was by means of sailing vessels going round by the Cape of Good Hope,

* A month after Lord Castlereagh's appointment to the Board of Control, he thus expressed himself in a letter to Lord Wellesley:—

"I avail myself of the first tranquil day I have had to address myself to your Lordship, and to express the very particular satisfaction I derive from feeling myself placed in a situation which connects me in close official habits with your Lordship; from which I promise myself not less advantage in my public capacity, than the gratification to my individual feelings, from former intercourse, from common connections, and from the zeal we shall both feel in the same object. I venture to flatter myself that I shall have the good fortune to possess, as I shall endeavour to deserve, your unqualified and unreserved confidence; and I trust it is unnecessary to assure you that my utmost exertions shall be employed to give stability to your administration, and to co-operate with you in the conduct of Indian affairs with that cordiality which can alone render our united exertions successful.

"Whatever circumstances may have occurred in the course of your official intercourse with this country not altogether satisfactory, and however your Lordship may feel many strong motives inclining you to return to Europe, yet I am led to hope that nothing will induce you to deliver up the government to other hands till you have fully completed all those arrangements, equally connected with the most important and brilliant features of your own administration as with the conclusion which has been put to the late war [with Tippoo Saib by the taking of Seringapatam]. In whatever degree the pecuniary affairs of the Company may have felt the pressure of the contest, it is connected with your Lordship's distinguished reputation, in which every friend of yours, and of the country, must feel a deep interest, that you should be the individual to lay the foundation of that system, and of those measures which are in peace to accomplish the prosperity of those possessions which you have so successfully preserved and improved in war; and I feel the strongest persuasion that the same energy of mind which led you so happily to conceive, and so effectually to execute, the many arduous measures connected with the late contest, will, when applied to another state of things, be as fruitful in drawing from peace the resources of which it is susceptible, as you have proved yourself in war competent to direct those resources to their true and legitimate purpose. Your Lordship's reputation as a statesman during a period of war has been established on the most solid foundation; it only remains to exhibit the qualifications which belong to less arduous times to perfect in result, as well as in the estimation of those who are now inclined to watch your progress with a critical eye, the character of your administration."—LORD CASTLEREAGH *to* LORD WELLESLEY, *Doneira, August* 10, 1802; *Wellesley Despatches*, iii. 32.

33. The assistance he rendered him with the Court of Directors.

which in general took six months to make the voyage. The Governor-General was then, practically speaking, despotic, at least in immediate operations, for it took twelve months to review his decisions; and before that time elapsed, the measures adopted were for the most part irrevocable. It is to this circumstance, perhaps, coupled with the extraordinary ability of a succession of Governors-General and commanders, that the extraordinary growth and long-continued triumphs of our Eastern empire are to be ascribed. The principal duty of the President of the Board of Control—and it was a most important one—was to support the Governor-General against the Court of Directors in those measures, which experience had taught the former were necessary, but to which the latter, proceeding on less information, or more narrow views, might be inclined to refuse their assent. It may easily be believed that the great object of contention between them was money, and the wars which threatened to spend money. The East India Directors, looking chiefly to the dividends on their stock, and extremely nervous about anything which threatened to diminish them, were inspired with a perpetual dread of wars, and could never be brought to understand the position of their Indian dominions, where a small body of aliens had acquired an extraordinary dominion over ten thousand times their number of natives, and to whom conquest, or at least successful resistance to attack, was essential to existence. This divergence between the views of the Governor-General in India and the Directors at home had been of long standing; but it had greatly increased during Lord Wellesley's administration, in consequence of the intrepid spirit and decided disposition of that illustrious man. The Directors dreaded his victories more than his defeats; for from the former they anticipated an increased expenditure—from the latter, a salutary check to ambition. This jealousy of Eastern triumphs had been brought to a climax

CHAP. II. 1802.

by the capture of Seringapatam and annexation of Tippoo Saib's kingdom to the British dominions; and to such a pitch did the discord arise that, when Lord Castlereagh entered upon office, he found Lord Wellesley on the point of resigning his situation.[1]

[1] Wellesley Desp. iii. 36, 41, 49.

34. His success with the Directors in regard to Lord Wellesley's measures.

It required all Lord Castlereagh's mingled firmness and suavity of manner to overcome these difficulties, and obtain from the Directors a sanction for those measures, in appearance bold, in reality prudent, which Lord Wellesley had commenced, and which Lord Castlereagh at once saw were indispensable to the safety of our Indian Empire.* The annexation of Tippoo Saib's dominions in the Carnatic, and the Doab and part of Oude in Central India, were the first subjects which he found in dispute, and to both the Directors were decidedly hostile. At length, though with no small difficulty, he obtained their sanction in each case.† Other subjects, however, still remained in dispute, which, as they affected private interests, were not so easily adjusted, and engrossed much of his attention during this and the succeeding year. Among many others were the foundation of a college at Calcutta for the education of the

* "Your Lordship is aware how difficult and delicate a task it is for the person who fills my situation, particularly when strong feelings have once been excited, to manage such a body as the Court of Directors so as to shield the person in yours from any unpleasant interference on their part. I am sanguine in hoping that those impressions, which never should have led them for a moment to forget your substantial services, will pass away, and the remainder of your government be rendered perfectly satisfactory both to your Lordship and to them."—LORD CASTLEREAGH *to* LORD WELLESLEY, *Nov.* 15, 1802; *Wellesley Despatches*, iii. 92, 93.

† "As far as my own opinion is concerned, I have no hesitation in stating that your Lordship would have been inexcusable upon the case made out (however, the transaction may furnish plausible grounds of statement in debate), had you suffered our interests in the Carnatic to rest on their former footing, and that such a procedure would have not only left our security in that quarter as imperfect as probable treachery could well make it, but would have shown a weakness and facility in our counsels, after the disclosures had taken place, which could not fail to have encouraged every other ally to trifle with our forbearance. I shall therefore feel no difficulty in giving the measure my full support; but beyond this I entertain a strong conviction that the transaction in itself will bear discussion, and ultimately establish itself as equally just and politic in the opinion of Parliament."—LORD CASTLEREAGH *to* LORD WELLESLEY, *Sept.* 27, 1802; *Wellesley Despatches*, iii. 38, 39.

Company's servants; the appointment of meritorious young men to official situations in India by the Governor-General, without reference to the home authorities, which was thought to interfere with their own patronage; and the encouragement given to the private trade, which, it was feared, would encroach on their monopoly. It was with no small difficulty, and only by means of the polished courtesy by which his manner and correspondence were at all times distinguished, that these subjects of contention were adjusted, and the measures of the Governor-General in India, suggested by the necessities of the public service under his direction, reconciled with the demands of the Directors at home, mainly prompted by their private interests. At length, however, the difficult task was accomplished; the College of Fort-William sanctioned, and the question of patronage adjusted. Lord Wellesley was always the first to acknowledge his obligations to Lord Castlereagh for the assistance he rendered him on these delicate matters, which was the more effective from his disinterested renunciation of all patronage for himself connected with his own office.[1]

[1] Castlereagh Corresp. i., Nov. 15, 1802, and Aug. 25, and Sept. 27, 1803; Wellesley Desp. iii. 39-43.

35. Threatened reduction of the army.

Other matters, not more difficult of adjustment, but still more important in their consequences to our Eastern dominions, soon engrossed his attention. The first of these was the strength of the King's troops in India, which both the Directors and the Cabinet at home wished to *be reduced to ten thousand men,* and which Lord Wellesley was desirous of augmenting to twenty thousand in contemplation of the impending Mahratta war. The second was the obtaining in Europe adequate supplies of silver to meet the daily increasing requirements both of the public service and of commercial undertakings in India; and the third was the devising of means to stop the increase, and, if possible, effect the gradual reduction of the public debt, the magnitude of which was exciting well-founded apprehensions. Of the importance of these matters at that crisis in India, some idea may be formed from the fact that, at

CHAP. II.

1802.

the period when these reductions were in contemplation, our Indian empire was threatened by the combined hostility of the whole Mahratta powers, which it required the genius and daring of Wellesley and Lake, and the heroic courage of the British troops, to surmount. The crisis was of the most violent kind; and the threatened reduction of the British troops would probably have occasioned the loss of our whole Eastern dominions. But such were the necessities of the Cabinet, owing to the sweeping and ill-judged reductions made, as usual, on the conclusion of the peace of Amiens, and so loud the clamours of the East India Directors for a reduction of expense, that it was with no small difficulty, and only by the united efforts of Lord Wellesley and Lord Castlereagh, that the threatened reduction was averted, and the British troops in India retained in sufficient strength to achieve the victories of Assaye, Delhi, and Laswaree.*

36. Lord Wellesley's testimony to his discharge of the duties of President of the Board of Control.

Of the manner in which Lord Castlereagh discharged his important duties at the Board of Control at this eventful crisis in Eastern story, no more convincing proof can be figured than has been furnished by the best of all testimonies, that of Lord Wellesley himself: "The whole course," says he, "of my public service, as far as it was connected with the public acts of that most excellent and

* "It will be satisfactory to you to learn that we have provided for 50,000 seamen for the ensuing year, and 110,000 regulars, exclusive of India. The King's troops destined for the peace establishment of India, exclusive of 2000 for Ceylon, are to consist of three regiments of cavalry, of 640 rank and file each, and fifteen regiments of infantry, at an establishment of 1000 rank and file each. With a view of keeping this force as complete as possible, a relief of a full regiment will proceed annually from Europe. This, with a regular supply of 1200 recruits, and the men to be procured from the battalions to be brought home in each year, will, it is hoped, accomplish this important purpose. . . . I trust your Lordship will feel satisfied with this arrangement. A proposition had been made by the late chairman to reduce the King's troops serving in India *to two regiments of cavalry and seven of infantry*, of 1200 men each. I felt myself bound to resist so improvident a reduction upon every principle; and I am to acquaint you that the present Chairs have consented, and I have no doubt the Court will acquiesce in the proposed establishment."—LORD CASTLEREAGH *to* LORD WELLESLEY, *December* 17, 1802; *Wellesley Despatches*, iii. 96, 97.

able personage, affords one connected series of proofs of his eminent ability, spotless integrity, high sense of honour, comprehensive and enlarged views, sound practical knowledge, ready despatch of business, and perfect discretion and temper, in the conduct of the most arduous public affairs. He came to the chief conduct of the affairs of India at a most critical period, when the British Government was engaged in that contest with the Mahratta chiefs which, under the happy auspices of Lord Lake and General Wellesley, terminated so gloriously, and completed the destruction of the French power in the East. Although he differed with me in some points connected with the origin of the war, he most zealously and honourably assisted me in the conduct of it, and gave me his powerful support in Parliament against all the assaults of my enemies. He at once saw the great objects of policy which I contemplated, and which have since been so happily accomplished; and, with a generosity and vigour of mind not often equalled, he gave me every aid in the pursuit of a plan not his own, and, afterwards, every just degree of honour and praise in its ultimate success. In my published despatches your Lordship will find abundant proofs of your brother's merits of every description, especially in the transactions in the Carnatic, in Oude, and other complicated affairs, and in his liberal support of the College of Fort-William. But I must add one circumstance, which does not appear in these despatches. During the whole of my administration, he never interfered in the slightest degree in the vast patronage of our Indian empire; and he took especial care to signify this determination to the expectants by whom he was surrounded, and to me. In his published despatches, many examples occur of great abilities and statesmanlike views; and they are all written in a style much more worthy of imitation than of censure."[1]

[1] Lord Wellesley to Lord Londonderry, June 26, 1839; Castlereagh Corresp. i. 100.

So zealous was Lord Castlereagh for the interests of the public service, and so utterly was he destitute of those

CHAP. III.

1802.

favouritisms or partialities which so often influence the conduct of those who have public appointments at their disposal, that, not content with declining all patronage himself, he wrote to the Governor-General stating that, as he could not avoid giving letters of recommendation and introduction to the Government of India, he particularly requested that "attention should be paid only to the merits and qualifications for office of the persons introduced."[1] He gave the most convincing proof of his determination to attend only to the interests of the public in his appointments to office, in the selection of Lord William Bentinck for the important situation of Governor of Madras.* Beyond all doubt it was in a great degree owing to the discerning and patriotic spirit in which all appointments were made in India at this time, both by him and Lord Wellesley, that the foundation was laid of that wonderful body of public servants, unequalled in any other age or country, who brought our Indian empire through all the dangers with which it was afterwards assailed. It is to be hoped the race will not be terminated either by the injudicious rigour of competitive examinations, or by the pressure from without, now that India has been brought under the direct government of the House of Commons.

37. His disinterested conduct in public appointments.

[1] Castlereagh Corresp. i. 117.

Lord Castlereagh entertained, as well he might, the very highest admiration of the Governor-General of India. Amidst the endless mass of petty jealousies and unworthy intrigues which private correspondence brings to light in regard to lesser men, it is refreshing to see the cordial unanimity which prevailed between these great ones; their entire absence of any jealousy or rivalry for fame, power,

38. Lord Castlereagh's opinion of Lord Wellesley.

* "Lord William Bentinck has been appointed to that important situation (the Governorship of Madras), and will embark in the month of February to take charge of that Government. The character his Lordship bears for honour, integrity, and diligence, and the excellent understanding which he undoubtedly possesses, lead me to form very sanguine expectations of his success."—LORD CASTLEREAGH *to* LORD WELLESLEY, *December* 17, 1802; *Wellesley Despatches*, iii. 97.

or patronage; and the complete devotion of both to the real interests of the country, and them alone. At this period Lord Castlereagh's opinion of Lord Wellesley was thus expressed in a letter to the latter: "I can truly assure your Lordship I look with confidence to the winding up of your government being marked with as much solidity as its progress has been brilliant and commanding; and, in the two great features of retrenchment of expense and conduct towards the native powers, I am satisfied, when the government passes from your Lordship's hands, that we shall have as little to desire as to regret: for however earnest your Lordship may feel to place our interests and authority in that quarter, before you leave India, upon the surest and most lasting foundation, your mind is too much alive to the true principles of British policy to purchase any advantage at too high a price." [1]

[1] Lord Castlereagh to Lord Wellesley, Sept. 27, 1802; Wellesley Desp. iii. 41.

39. Lord Castlereagh's diplomatic intercourse with Persia.

In addition to the concerns of our Indian empire, in themselves weighty enough at that period to engross any ordinary man, Lord Castlereagh, when at the head of the Board of Control, was engaged in an uninterrupted and very anxious correspondence with our ministers and diplomatic agents, both at the courts of Ispahan, Bagdad, and elsewhere in Central Asia. Fortunately for him, the British interests in Persia were in the hands of a very able man, Mr Harford Jones, for whom Lord Castlereagh had a great and well-deserved regard. The circumstances, however, were extremely critical; for Persia, writhing under the grasp of the great northern power, was on the point of losing Erivan, and with it the most important northern provinces of her empire; and although the danger from Russia to our Eastern dominions was clearly foreseen, it was impossible for Great Britain, threatened with invasion by Napoleon in Europe, and engaged with the Mahratta confederacy in India, to render Persia any material assistance. In these circumstances it required all the firmness and address of Lord Castlereagh

CHAP. II. 1802.

to prevent that power from succumbing at once in the conflict; and the correspondence of Mr Harford Jones with him occupies a large and interesting part of the *Castlereagh Correspondence.** Nor was Turkey in a less critical state; for the insurrection of the Wahabees in Arabia threatened to tear from it nearly the whole of the Asiatic dominions, from which its chief resources to ward off the impending attack of Russia were derived. Lord Castlereagh clearly perceived, and strongly expressed in his correspondence, his sense of these impending dangers; but his efforts to avert them were necessarily confined to letters and encouragements: material resources he had none at his disposal to aid in preserving the equilibrium of the East.

The glorious termination of the Mahratta war by the victories of General Lake and General Wellesley, excited, as might have been expected, the warmest interest in Lord Castlereagh's breast: and he conveyed his sentiments to Lord

* A very curious memoir, by a French officer in India to his Government, is thus proponed in a letter from Mr Harford Jones, which subsequent events have rendered prophetic: "The power of England in India, or rather, in the East, is formed by her possessions in Hindostan, the Deccan, Ceylon, the isles of Sunda, and the Factory in China; the isles of Penang and St Helena, her allies and tributaries. The Mohammedan and Hindoo princes who are under the influence of India are, 1. The Peishwa, and such of the Mahratta Confederacy as acknowledge his authority; 2. The Soubadar of the Deccan; 3. The Soubadar of Oude; 4. The Nabob of Arcot; 5. The Nabob of Surat; 6. The Rajah of Mysore; 7. The Rajah of Tanjore; 8. The Rajah of Travancore. All these princes are more or less under the influence of this power, and they would not deserve to be mentioned if their names did not furnish occasion to publish the infamous methods which the English Government have employed to seize upon their possessions and treasures. No Indian prince has ever had connections, either of a political or commercial nature with that Government, which have not become fatal to him. It is, nevertheless, the English Government which unceasingly vociferates against the pretended ambition and tyranny which we exercise over the weak states which border on our empire. The power of the English in India is the most precious portion of the British Empire. It equals in extent, population, and riches, the first powers in the world; but you would form a very erroneous opinion of its strength or solidity if you should calculate these from her possessions. It is consoling to me to be able to assure you that *this source of wealth, so dangerous to our peace and happiness, may be diverted and dried up more easily than is conceived.*"—*French Memoir, given in by* LORD CLANCARTY *to* LORD CASTLEREAGH, *July* 4, 1805; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, v. 408.

Wellesley in language equally appropriate and eloquent. "The convoy," said he, "which sailed ten days since will have conveyed to your Lordship, and to the gallant army employed by you in the field, the thanks and acknowledgments of Parliament for the splendid and important services which have been rendered to the country in the late glorious campaign. In the hope of being able to acquaint your Lordship with the King's sentiments and determination in regard to the individuals most conspicuously engaged in this brilliant career of victory, I delayed writing from day to day till the ships had actually sailed. The packet now under despatch will probably outstrip the convoy, and thus enable me to be the first to offer to your Lordship my cordial congratulations on the series of events, than which none have ever occurred in the military history of our country more proudly calculated to confirm and even exalt the reputation and glory of the British arms. The whole of this campaign, in the conception of the plan, in the preparation of the army for the field, in the application of it to the vulnerable and important points of the enemy's territory, and, above all, in the conduct of the army in the day of battle, must ever be deemed a *chef d'œuvre* of military energy, foresight, and science, and cannot fail in this age of arms to augment, by the confidence which it is calculated to inspire, our security not only in the East, but in every quarter of the empire, at home and abroad. What mark of favour the King may ultimately destine for your Lordship it is not for me to anticipate—none can exceed the fair and just reward of your distinguished and honourable claim; but I do presume, in confidence, to hope that the two illustrious officers, whose achievements have never been surpassed, will on this occasion be upheld by the most marked and conclusive proofs of the estimation in which their services are held."[1] These anticipations were soon realised: by Lord Castlereagh's advice Lord Wellesley was advanced a step in the peerage, by being created a marquess; General

40. Lord Castlereagh's acknowledgment of Lord Wellesley's conduct and promotions on the Mahratta war.

[1] Lord Castlereagh to Lord Wellesley, May 19 and 21, 1804; Wellesley Desp. iii. 573-576.

CHAP. II. 1804.

Lake was made a peer, while for the victor of Assaye was reserved only the honour of a knight of the Bath. They did well to begin quietly; the steps in the peerage were not numerous enough for his victories; and he who was destined to fight his way up to a dukedom required to commence with the first military order.

41. Change of Ministry, and return of Mr Pitt to office. May 16, 1804.

Contemporary with the receipt of this brilliant intelligence was an important change in the administration of Great Britain. Mr Addington, whose Government had for a considerable time been declining in strength, and whose majority in the House of Commons had fallen to forty, felt himself unequal to the task of guiding the vessel of the State through the shoals by which it was beset, under the immediate risk of an invasion from France, against which Power war had recently before been declared. In this crisis the King, on the recommendation of the Cabinet, sent for Mr Pitt, and that noble statesman, in that moment of exaltation, instead of aiming at the completing of party triumph or the abasement of political opponents, counselled his Majesty to form a united administration, without the exclusion of any of the Opposition. This advice was strongly enforced during a protracted conference of three hours in the King's cabinet by Mr Pitt; and his Majesty, though perfectly aware of the small chance of any coalition ministry holding together, agreed to do so, but on the express condition that Mr Fox was to be excluded. This stipulation proved fatal to the project of a united Ministry. Mr Fox, indeed, emulating the generosity of his rival, strongly recommended his friends to accept office; but they very naturally and honourably declined to join the administration if their chief was excluded. The result was, that Lord Granville, Lord Spencer, and Mr Windham, kept aloof, and declined Mr Pitt's offer of taking them into the Cabinet; and, after several days spent in anxious suspense, the Government was formed exclusively of Tories, with Mr Pitt and Lord Eldon at its head. The Catholic question, which had

brought the famous Tory Government to an abrupt termination, was, by common consent, kept in abeyance, crushed by the greater terrors of French invasion. Lord Castlereagh retained his former office of President of the Board of Control.*

When Mr Pitt resumed the helm he found the nation again involved in war with France, and that on a scale much beyond what had ever been before. Napoleon had

* "In the Commons the majority of Government was materially reduced, while the minority exceeded two hundred. Under these circumstances his Majesty's Ministers, dubious how long they might be enabled to retain a majority in Parliament, and under a strong conviction that against such a combination of numbers, talent, and connection, it was no longer to be expected that they could continue to administer the government with that energy and effect which the public interests at such a moment required, were of opinion they would best discharge their duty by availing themselves of the first occasion which the King's recovery afforded them, of advising his Majesty to form an administration which might be likely to unite in Parliament greater strength in support of his Government. This advice was certainly offered in the confident hope that the King would turn his attention to Mr Pitt. This expectation was not disappointed, and the Lord Chancellor was desired by the King to learn Mr Pitt's sentiments upon the formation of a new Government. Mr Pitt, under the present circumstances of the empire, considered it as his duty to bring under the King's consideration the expediency of forming an arrangement which should embrace the leading men of all parties, as best calculated to keep down factious discussions during the war, and to afford the King the repose and tranquillity so essential to his health. In a personal interview with the King, of three hours, he pressed the proposition upon his Majesty's most serious attention. The result was an acquiescence on the part of the King in the leading men of all parties (*Mr Fox excepted*) being included. Upon this being made known, Mr Fox urged his friends to lend themselves to the arrangement. This they declined, unless he was also to hold office; and, upon Lord Granville, Lord Spencer, and Mr Windham being applied to by Mr Pitt, they also refused to accept of office if Mr Fox was to be proscribed. Mr Pitt having made every effort in the hope of disarming hostility to the King's Government, and having gone greater lengths than was congenial to the feelings and sentiments of a large portion of the public, and of many of his best friends, did not hesitate a moment in proceeding to submit to his Majesty the best arrangement for the administration of his affairs which his means of selection, thus narrowed, would afford. I transmit to your Lordship the appointments as far as they have hitherto gone."—LORD CASTLEREAGH *to* LORD WELLESLEY, *May* 18, 1804; *Wellesley Despatches*, iii. 571, 572.

List of the Cabinet.—Lord Chancellor, Lord Eldon; Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr Pitt; President of the Council, Duke of Portland; Privy Seal, Lord Westmoreland; Foreign Secretary, Lord Harrowby; Home Secretary, Lord Hawkesbury; Colonies and War, Lord Camden; Admiralty, Lord Melville; Ordnance, Lord Chatham; Chancellor of Duchy of Lancaster, Lord Mulgrave; President of the Board of Trade, Duke of Montrose; President of the Board of Control, Lord Castlereagh.—*Wellesley Despatches*, iii. 573.

CHAP. II.

1803.

42. Forces of Great Britain to resist invasion at this time. June 23, 1803.

gained immensely in strength during the two years that the peace of Amiens lasted; and, in the absence of Continental war, the whole of the force was directed against this country. The camp at Boulogne, since so famous, was already formed. Hanover was overrun by a French corps under Marshal Mortier, and the whole of Great Britain was bristling with volunteers, who, in the hour of their country's danger, were arming in its behalf. Lord Castlereagh, at this crisis, gave the following account to Lord Wellesley of the defensive preparations and feeling of the country: "Nothing can exceed the spirit of the nation, as well as of the Parliament, on the subject of the war. The degree of concurrence is far beyond what could have been hoped for, and the only difficulty Government has to contend against in either House is the charge of not calling even more largely on the resources of the country. . . . The budget of £13,000,000 is in progress, with every prospect of being carried through with a very slight resistance. If we can accomplish that grand desideratum of providing, even in war, against the accumulation of debt, it will place us indeed on high ground. . . . The plan of raising 50,000 men, to be officered by officers of the line, is in progress. When this army is raised, we shall then have at home 50,000 regulars, 90,000 militia, and 50,000 of this description of force, which will be applicable to the defence of either island—in all, 190,000 men, exclusive of yeomanry, and local levies of a more irregular class, which will be carried to a very considerable extent.* It is also hoped that a draft for the line from the other descriptions of force may be obtained, so as to complete the regular army. This will increase our line at home to 70,000, which will give us a disposable force of at least 40,000, without weakening internal defence improvidently." [1]

[1] Lord Castlereagh to Lord Wellesley, June 23, 1803; Wellesley Desp. iii. 522.

Lord Castlereagh remained only three years at the

* This anticipation was more than realised. The volunteers in 1804 were 340,000.

head of the Board of Control, though they were the most important and glorious our empire ever knew. In July 1805, he was transferred by Mr Pitt to the head of the War Department on the resignation of Earl Camden, whose strength was not equal to the increasing duties of that arduous office. His new duties brought him immediately into contact with Lord Nelson, Lord Keith, Sir Sidney Smith, and a number of other distinguished officers, who had been for some time engaged in preparations for an attack on the flotilla at Boulogne; as also with a number of ingenious projectors, who brought forward various plans for the accomplishment of its destruction by means of congreve rockets and other newly invented projectiles. In these Lord Castlereagh, whose disposition and turn of mind was essentially warlike, took a warm interest; and he prepared and wrote out with his own hand a memorandum containing minute instructions for the conduct of the attack, from which the greatest hopes were entertained.* The attack, as is well

43. His plan for the destruction of the Boulogne flotilla.

* "It appearing from the report and survey of the Ordnance Engineers, that a station may be taken by the rocket launches within two thousand yards of the centre of the basin, and about twelve hundred yards distant from the enemy's batteries, it is proposed to make an attempt to set fire to the flotilla by successive discharges of rockets from twelve launches, each carrying forty-eight rockets. In order that the rocket launches may arrive at their proper station, the attack must be made when none of the enemy's flotilla are advanced in the road, or if advanced they must be previously driven in. It seems desirable, if possible, to conduct the attack so as to avoid the necessity of disposting the enemy's advanced guard. With this view, it is proposed that the British squadron, with the exception of light vessels occasionally appearing off for the purpose of observation, and making daily reports of the enemy's position, should be withdrawn for the three or four days preceding the attack. When everything is prepared and the weather favourable, if the enemy's vessels are reported *not to be without the harbour*, the squadron, consisting of such number of vessels as may be requisite to protect the launches and to annoy the enemy with shells after the rockets have been discharged, to sail from Walmer Roads so as to arrive off Boulogne at half ebb, which will secure the attack from interruption from the enemy's boats till the following flood. The period of low water seems to be the most favourable for discharging the rockets; the enemy's flotilla will then be most exposed to combustion. When the necessary preparations have been made, should the enemy's vessels be reported to be at anchor in the roads, in order to avoid the loss of the season, it will be necessary to proceed off Boulogne with a squadron of sufficient numbers and strength to dispost them, as this may be found ultimately necessary; all the

CHAP. II. 1803.

known, failed, not from anything erroneous in the plan drawn up by Lord Castlereagh, nor from anything in the position of the flotilla which placed it beyond the reach of injury, but solely from the attacking vessels not being able to get so near as to enable them to send their projectiles with sufficient effect into the inner basins, where the enemy's ships were crowded together. With the improved gunnery and greatly enlarged power of throwing shells which has now been attained, it is probable that a similar attack would have been attended with success. The reason is, that supposing the range of the mortars to be as great, and the practice as good, in the land batteries as in the vessels afloat, the *mark presented* by a large squadron crowded into a small space is *so much larger* than a single vessel or a series of single vessels at the distance of two or three miles, that the chances of the single detached vessels inflicting far greater damage on their crowded opponents than they received themselves are such as in a manner to insure success.

44. Mr Pitt's foreign policy at this time.

But Lord Castlereagh was ere long called to more important combinations than those for the destruction of the Boulogne flotilla; and those great principles of policy were embraced by Mr Pitt, which, unceasingly

requisite arrangements for carrying the same into execution to be immediately made. In either case, whether the attack is to be effected by surprise or force, an active bombardment, directed against the basin, should immediately follow the discharge of the rockets, with the view of distracting the enemy's attention, and preventing them from putting out any fire which may have taken place. The attack to be made as soon after dark as the tide will permit, when the lights in the houses at Boulogne may serve as a direction, both for the launches rowing in, and for directing the rockets. A steady officer to be appointed to each launch, who is to be answerable for placing the boat in a proper position, and discharging the rockets in the direction of the basin. A directing boat to lead in, taking a station two thousand yards from the centre of the basin (this point to be previously laid down on the chart with the utmost precision, and ascertained by land or sea marks), about twelve hundred yards to the south-west of the imperial battery. The directing boat having dropped an anchor at the proper station, each launch is, in succession, to row round that boat, and having discharged their rockets immediately to retire. Fresh launches to follow each other at such intervals as will not unnecessarily expose them to the concentrated fire from the enemy's batteries, before they can take their station and discharge their rockets."—*Memorandum by* LORD CASTLEREAGH, *September* 24, 1805; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, v. 106, 107.

pursued during the next ten years, at length brought the contest to a triumphant issue. Dear-bought experience had convinced that great minister both of the tremendous strength of the French revolutionary power and of the vanity of the expectation that any stay to its conquests was to be looked for from the failure of its finances. Napoleon's system of making war maintain war had rendered him superior, *while victorious,* to any, even the severest, embarrassments of the treasury, by placing the whole resources of the enemy at his disposal. The bad success of the war which Austria had previously waged with him had rendered it evident that she was no longer a match for the French power. Although Russia presented a most powerful reserve, yet she was too far off to be able to render much assistance in the commencement of the struggle; and the armies of the two powers had separated on no very amicable terms after the disaster of 1799. The strength of France was now immensely increased by the formation of the Confederation of the Rhine and the extension of Napoleon's power over the whole of Italy. It was no longer to be expected that any single state in Europe could either cope with France or provide any effectual check to its ambition. It was by a COALITION alone that the object could be attained, or any security afforded for the independence of even the greatest European powers. That a confederacy of the great powers, if seriously gone into and resolutely supported, could achieve the object, was very evident; but there were obstacles all but insurmountable in the way of its formation.

45. Great difficulty in the way of forming a coalition against France.

Prussia would naturally form the right wing of such a confederacy, Austria the centre and left, and Russia the reserve; and if the military strength of the whole could be brought into action, it would be superior to that of France, even aided by the troops of the Rhenish Confederation and Northern Italy. But it had hitherto been found impossible to bring Prussia into any such common

CHAP. II.

1803.

measures. Ever since the Cabinet of Berlin withdrew from the contest by the peace of 1794, it had observed a strict neutrality, and abstained from any hostile demonstration, even when during the successes of Suwarrow in Italy it would, beyond all doubt, have been attended at no risk with decisive success. Jealousy of Austria and the dread of being left single-handed to combat France when defeat had driven the other confederates from the field, was the cause of this backwardness; but it presented the most serious obstacle in the way of any joint measure for the preservation of European independence. This is not to be wondered at: neutrality is the natural resource of the weak in presence of a conflict with the strong.

46. Mr Pitt's treaties with Austria and Russia.

Russia, conscious of greater strength, and farther removed from the scene of danger, was disposed to enter into any coalition which should have for its object to put a bar to the further encroachments of France, and, if possible, reduce her to such limits as experience had shown were alone consistent with the peace and independence of Europe. Mr Pitt had availed himself to the utmost of these favourable dispositions; and had at length, by great exertions, brought Austria and Russia, threatened by a common danger, into common measures of defence. This was first done by a secret convention signed at Parma on November 6, 1804, which was only of a precautionary and defensive nature. By it these two powers agreed, in the event of France making any farther strides in Italy in addition to the incorporation of Piedmont, Genoa, Parma, and Placentia, to bring on either part very large forces into the field. Austria was to furnish 235,000; Russia, 115,000 men; and in the event of success, the frontier of the former power was to be advanced to the Adda in Italy, and she was to obtain Salzbourg and the Brisgau in Germany.[1] Nothing followed, however, on this treaty; and it was unknown till brought to light by the historian of the Con-

Nov. 6, 1804.

[1] Thiers, v. 355.

sulate and Empire. But in the April following, when the forces on the Channel were fully concentrated, and an invasion of Britain was almost daily expected, Mr Pitt effected a treaty between Austria, Russia, and Great Britain, which proved of the utmost importance, and formed the basis of the great coalition which, after sustaining numberless reverses, at length effected the deliverance of Europe.[1]

April 11.

[1] Thiers, v. 360, 361; Martin's Traités, viii. 330.

47. Terms of the last treaty of alliance:

By this important treaty, it was agreed by the high contracting parties that the forces of the Confederacy—which at that period embraced only Great Britain, Russia, Austria, and Sweden—should be fixed at 500,000 men; and the objects of the League were declared to be to compel—1. The evacuation of the country of Hanover and of the north of Germany; 2. The establishment of the independence of the republics of Holland and Switzerland; 3. The re-establishment of the King of Sardinia in Piedmont, with as large an accession of territory as circumstances would admit; 4. The security of the kingdom of Naples, and the evacuation of the Italian peninsula, including the island of Elba. To enable the different contracting parties to fulfil their onerous engagements, Great Britain engaged to furnish subsidies to them all in proportion of £1,250,000 for every 100,000 men brought into the field. By separate articles, signed by England and Russia only, it was agreed that the objects of the alliance should be attempted as soon as 400,000 men could be got in a state of readiness, of which Austria was expected to furnish 235,000; Russia, 115,000; and Hanover, Sardinia, and Naples, the remaining 35,000. By a separate article, Russia engaged to march 60,000 men towards the frontiers of Austria, and 80,000 to those of *Prussia*, and, if necessary, to bring 180,000 men into the field, instead of the 115,000 originally provided, under the same conditions as to subsidies from England. The allies also bound themselves to make common cause against any power which should ally itself with France in the approaching contest.[1]

[1] Castlereagh Corresp. vi. 2; Martin, viii. 330; Thiers, v. 360, 361.

CHAP. II.

1805.

48. To which Austria at length accedes.

Great difficulty, however, was experienced in getting Austria to accede to the latter treaty, in consequence of the extremely embarrassed state of its finances, which rendered so considerable an armament from its own resources a matter of impossibility. The most energetic efforts were made by Mr Pitt, on the part of Great Britain, and M. Novosittzoff, on that of Russia; but the Austrian Minister at St Petersburg, Count Stadion, so forcibly represented the exhausted state of the imperial finances, that it was only by the British Government agreeing to advance a subsidy of £3,000,000, one-half to be immediately paid down as a *mise en campagne*, that the accession of the Cabinet of Vienna to the League was obtained. When she did accede, however, it was effectively, for she engaged to embody no less than 320,000 men. By a subsequent convention, signed at Helsingborg on the 31st August in the same year, Sweden acceded to the alliance. England agreed to pay £1800 a-month for every 1000 men engaged in the common cause, and the Cabinet of Stockholm promised to bring 12,000 men into the field in Pomerania. Thus was the foundation laid of the grand alliance, which afterwards wrought such wonders for the deliverance of Europe; and, at the same time, a clause was inserted in the treaty of alliance, providing alike against any attempt to control public opinion or impose an obnoxious Government on France, and any misapplication of the strength of the coalition to the purposes of separate aggrandisement on the part of any of the coalesced powers. A congress was to be held at the conclusion of the war, to provide in a more effectual manner than had yet been done for the independence of nations, and the peace and security of Europe.[1]*

Aug. 31, 1805.

[1] See treaties in Martin, viii. 330, 350; Parl. Deb. vi. 11, 17.

* "The Emperor and King being disposed to form an energetic concert, with the sole view of insuring to Europe a solid and lasting peace, founded upon the principles of justice, equity, and the law of nations, are aware of the necessity of a mutual understanding at this time with regard to those principles on which they will act, as soon as the events of the war may render it

CHAP. II.

1805.

Negotiations of France and England with Prussia.

Still Prussia held aloof, and it was a matter of the highest importance to obtain her accession to the coalition. Mr Pitt judged wisely, that it would have a material effect in terminating her irresolution, if a powerful army was organised in her vicinity in the north of Germany; and Great Britain, resting on the King's dominions in Hanover, the fidelity of which was well known, was to concentrate considerable forces on the Continent, and evince a determination at length to take her part in the great fields of Continental warfare. The Cabinet having acquiesced in these views, it was determined to act accordingly; though, unhappily, from inexperience in war, and a total ignorance of the value of time in military operations, the preparations were by no means made with the rapidity which the urgency of the case required. Meanwhile, Napoleon was more expeditious. He despatched Duroc to Berlin, with an offer, on his part, to cede Hanover, then in the occupation of his troops, to Prussia, if she would join his alliance and make common cause against England, Austria, and Russia. The bait was too tempting to be refused, and a formal treaty was on the point of being drawn out, when Napoleon drew back, and offered, instead, the temporary possession of Hanover as the price of neutrality. Matters were in this precarious state, and the conduct of the Cabinet of Berlin still undecided, when the Austrian troops crossed the Inn, and commenced the invasion of Bavaria, which was

necessary. These principles are in no degree to *control public opinion in France*, or in any other countries where the combined armies may carry on their operations, with respect to *the form of government which it may be proper to adopt*, nor to appropriate to themselves, till peace shall be concluded, any of the conquests made by one or other of the belligerent parties; to take possession of the towns and territories which may be wrested from the common enemy in the names of the country or State to which they of right belong, and, in all other cases, in the name of all the members of the League; and, finally, to assemble, at the conclusion of the war, a general congress, to discuss and fix the provisions of the law of nations on a more definite basis than has been possible heretofore, and to insure this observance by a federative system, founded upon the situation of the different States of Europe."—*Parliamentary Debates*, v., *App.* 6, 7.

CHAP. II.

1805.

shortly followed by the breaking-up of the camp at Boulogne, and the march of the mighty army, 132,000 strong, assembled there for the invasion of England, towards the Rhine. After crossing that river, the corps commanded by Bernadotte, to which an important part in the projected operations against the Austrians was intrusted, by Napoleon's express orders, to shorten its march, violated the neutrality of the Prussian territory by marching through its province of Anspach. This palpable disregard of neutral rights, and open expression of contempt for the Prussian power, excited such indignation at Berlin, that it had wellnigh thrown them at once into the arms of the alliance. Still, however, the old system of temporising continued; a paltry compensation of 60,000 florins (£6000) was not disdained; and the Government, in the mean time, contented themselves with putting the army on the war footing, and intimating to France that they could no longer refuse a passage to the Russians through Silesia, since the French had made one for themselves through Anspach.[1]

Aug. 9. Aug. 28.

[1] Castlereagh Corresp. vi. 3, 4.

50. Efforts of Britain to engage Prussia in the alliance by sending an army to Germany.

The better to improve upon those dispositions of the Prussian Cabinet, and get them, if possible, to join heart and soul with the alliance against France, the British Government resolved on sending a very considerable force to the north of Germany. The preparation of this force was intrusted to Lord Castlereagh, as War Secretary, and he exerted the utmost vigour in the necessary arrangements, which he projected on a great scale, though, unfortunately, the late period at which the determination of the Cabinet was taken, and the extreme rapidity of Napoleon's conquests, rendered the expedition too late to be of any material service in the issue of the campaign. Had it been sent out a month earlier, and the Cabinet of Berlin taken its final resolution, the disasters of the campaign might have been all remedied or averted; the combined forces of Austria, Russia, Prussia, and Great Britain been arrayed in the open field against France, and Austerlitz had been Leipsic.[2]

[2] Castlereagh Corresp. vi. 4, 5.

51. Lord Castlereagh's military measures.

Though too late to be of any material service, the preparations of Great Britain were on a scale of uncommon magnitude, and gave an earnest of the strength with which she was capable of descending into the arena of Continental warfare. The force sent out, or speedily raised in Hanover, when it arrived exceeded that with which Wellington fought at Waterloo. Lord Castlereagh's arrangements were to send out 10,000 British infantry, in the first instance, to Hanover, to expel the trifling force of 2000 French, which alone was left in that country, and raise the country. Five thousand more troops were to follow as soon as possible; and for the whole service he contemplated sending from 30,000 to 35,000 infantry, and from 8000 to 10,000 cavalry.* Twenty thousand Russians were daily expected at Stralsund; a Swedish auxiliary force of 12,000 men, and a Danish one of 26,000, were assembled. The object of this army, which it was calculated might be raised to 70,000 or 80,000 men, was to raise Hanover, Brunswick, and the north of Germany, determine by the sight of material support the indecision of Prussia, and, in the event of success, aid in the deliverance of Holland, after expelling the French from Germany. Visionary as these projects may appear when it is recollected that the battle of Austerlitz and peace so soon after followed, there is nothing more certain than that they were not only within the bounds of possibility but probability, and that but for the fatal precipitance which led the Austrians and Russians to fight in Moravia, they would in all likelihood have been realised.†

* "As a general outline, it has occurred to me to suggest whether, taking the gross force now at home at 180,000 rank and file, of which about 70,000 is militia, a corps of from 30,000 to 35,000 infantry, and from 8000 to 10,000 cavalry, might not be immediately selected and appropriated to this service." —LORD CASTLEREAGH *to* DUKE OF YORK, *September* 1805; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, vi. 9.

† "It may be presumed that 20,000 Russians are by this time assembled at Stralsund; and from Mr Pierrepoint's last letters, it is probable that the Swedish subsidiary corps may have been extended from 4000 to 12,000 men by a subsequent engagement. The Danes are assembling a corps of 26,000 men in Holstein, and we have reason to believe that they have an understanding with Russia favourable to the common cause. Prussia shows no disposition to

CHAP. II.

1805.

52. The British expedition lands under favourable circumstances.

Oct. 16. Nov. 5. Dec. 10.

Dec. 22.

Oct. 20.

Oct. 21.

Nov. 3.

The Cabinet having adopted these views, and it having been notified to them that no obstacle would be opposed by the Prussian Government to the march of the Russian troops on their way to Stralsund through the Prussian territories, the expedition embarked in three divisions; the first of which, consisting of the King's German Legion, &c., set sail on the 16th October. The other divisions and cavalry sailed some time after; but it was not till the 10th December that the last put to sea, and having met with adverse winds, it was obliged to put back, and did not finally sail till the 22d December. Meanwhile, great events in other quarters were on the wing. On the 20th October General Mack surrendered at Ulm with 30,000 men to Napoleon; on the 21st, Nelson destroyed the combined fleet of thirty-three sail of the line at Trafalgar; and on the 3d November, the Emperor of Russia, having repaired to Berlin to concert measures for the de-

active measures of hostility; and it is to be hoped that the approaching interview between the King and the Emperor will have ascertained at least her neutrality. If so, and if she has not entered into engagements with France for the occupation of Hanover, there seems little probability of any serious obstacle being opposed to the immediate entrance of a light corps by the Elbe, directed, in the first instance, to the expulsion of the few remaining French, and the reoccupation of the Electorate; secondly, to the reassembling and extension of the Hanoverian army; and, thirdly, to the formation of a concert between the force at Stralsund and the Danes, to be supported from hence as circumstances may point out. The corps to be landed in the first instance should be sufficiently strong not only to effect the object and provide for its own safety against any inconsiderable attack, but such as will also effectually encourage the loyal Hanoverians confidently to declare themselves. For this purpose it seems desirable that not less than 10,000 men should be sent, and that it should consist, in addition to the German Legion, of about 5000 British infantry. . . . A corps of 10,000 men now sent into Hanover may, it is presumed, be doubled in number by 1st of March, which, joined to 20,000 Russians, 10,000 Swedes, and 26,000 Danes, would produce an active army of from 70,000 to 80,000 men at the opening of the campaign; to which might certainly be added not less than 20,000 from hence; making in the whole an active force of not less than 100,000 men for the deliverance of Holland in the first instance, and to be subsequently directed against the enemy as circumstances may point out. Should, however, the leading objects above stated, from unforeseen events, be disappointed, and the corps be obliged to retire, there is every reason to hope that the numbers of the German Legion may, even during a limited stay in the Hanoverian territory, be so rapidly and largely augmented as to render the expedition highly expedient even with a view to this limited result."—LORD CASTLEREAGH'S *Memorandum for the Cabinet, September* 1805; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, vi. 6-8.

liverance of Europe with the King of Prussia, swore eternal friendship to that monarch, and received the same oath from him, over the tomb of the Great Frederick. Everything looked auspicious at this juncture for the Grand Alliance: the open accession of Prussia to it was only a question of time; the British troops were arriving in considerable numbers on the Elbe; already the French had evacuated Hanover, and the people in great numbers were flocking to the British standards; the French naval power was in the mean time broken; and though Napoleon in person was victorious, and had advanced to Vienna in pursuit of the Austrian army, yet the Russian forces under Kutusoff were rapidly advancing through Moravia to their support, and the Archduke Charles, with 90,000 undiscouraged veterans, was rapidly advancing from Italy through the Tyrol to cut off his retreat. Prussia, with an equal force, was prepared to descend on his line of communications through Bavaria, and the whole north of Germany was ready to rise and double the strength of the British army, already landing there. Napoleon, who, with his usual daring policy, had plunged into the heart of Austria in pursuit of his beaten enemy, was on the verge of destruction—the Allies had nothing to do but retreat, and draw him on in Moravia to surround him with forces triple his own, and restore alone, by a victory like that of Leipsic, the balance of European power.[1]

[1] Castlereagh Corresp. vi. 37.

53. Battle of Austerlitz, and change of Prussia's policy.

In these desperate circumstances, the French Emperor was saved, and ten years' additional and terrible warfare was imposed on the European states before their deliverance was effected, by the gallant imprudence of Russia and the treacherous prudence of Prussia. Instead of retiring before the invader, and giving time to the Archduke Charles and the Prussian forces to descend on his line of communication with France, as they were about to do, the Austrians and Russians gave battle at Austerlitz, where they were totally defeated, and compelled instantly

CHAP. II. 1805.

to sue for peace, which they obtained only by a great sacrifice both of territory and in money. So far had Prussia gone in at length taking a decided part, and entering into the alliance, that Count Haugwitz was despatched from Berlin to Napoleon's headquarters, with the Prussian ultimatum, and a declaration of war if not acceded to, which was to have been commenced on 15th December; and the Prussian army, 80,000 strong, concentrated in Silesia, was prepared to have instantly marched on Napoleon's communications. Haugwitz arrived at Austerlitz shortly before the battle, and prudently awaited its issue before delivering his despatches. After the result, seeing that all was lost, and fearful that Prussia, if she took a decided part, would be exposed alone to the French Emperor's blows, he suddenly changed his ground, and wrote out, during the night before he had an interview, a *new and totally different address to the Emperor.* This *was a warm congratulation on his victory!* Napoleon was not deceived. He was no stranger to the nocturnal oaths at the tomb of the Great Frederick, or the part which Prussia was prepared to have played in the approaching drama; but he concealed his wrath, and skilfully turned it to the best advantage for his separate views against Great Britain. Assuming the expression of the most indignant feelings, he held out to the Prussian diplomatist, as the only mode of averting the punishment which their perfidy merited, the immediate abandonment of the system of neutrality, and a cordial alliance with France. As a lure to induce her to accede to these terms, the possession of Hanover till a general peace was held out. Impelled at once by terror and cupidity, the Prussian Cabinet, though not without serious doubts and compunction on the part of the King, agreed to the terms proposed; and

Dec. 15.

on the 15th December—the very day on which hostilities were to have commenced—Haugwitz signed a treaty of alliance with France. By this treaty Prussia was to be put in immediate possession of the Electorate of Hanover,

as well as the whole Continental dominions of the King of Great Britain, with the Margravate of Bayruth, in return for which she was to cede Anspach to Bavaria, and Neufchâtel and Clêves to France. By a further secret treaty, concluded on the 15th January, Prussia agreed to close the rivers in Northern Germany against the English, and renounce the promised exchange from Bavaria. A more disgraceful instance of tergiversation and perfidy is not recorded in history; for, at the moment when these treaties were signed, Prussia was in terms for a close alliance, both offensive and defensive, with Russia and Great Britain.[1]

[1] Castlereagh Corresp. vi. 5, 6; Hardenberg, ix. 47-49; Bignon, v. 17-19; Lav. ii. 149.

54. Return of the British expedition largely reinforced from Hanover.

This strange and unexpected turn of affairs necessarily imposed an entire change in the British policy in Northern Germany. Hanover being overrun with French troops, and Prussia in alliance with France, there was nothing more for the British expedition to do, and it would be exposed for no object to the most serious peril by remaining in Germany. Orders were, therefore, given for its recall, and the whole returned in safety to the British shores. But although the grand object of the expedition thus failed in consequence of unexpected events over which the British Government had no control, the minor and contingent object which Lord Castlereagh had in view in its preparation was fully attained. During the time when the British forces were in Germany, the loyal inhabitants of Hanover flocked in great numbers to their standard. The German Legion, which went out four, returned above ten thousand strong, and the foundation was thus laid of that magnificent corps which did such good service afterwards in the war, and was signalised in every field of fame from Vimeira to Waterloo.[2]

[2] Castlereagh Corresp. vi. 5, 6; Lord Castlereagh to Lord Keith, Dec. 29, 1805, Ibid. 94.

55. Great views of foreign war now formed by Lord Castlereagh.

But this turn of affairs, and the consideration which it led Lord Castlereagh to give to our resources for foreign war with land forces, led to far more important results than the mere doubling the strength of the German Legion. It showed him, and he was the first to perceive, of what immense importance the British disposable force, properly

CHAP. II. 1805.

directed, might be rendered, even in Continental military warfare. From a minute which he submitted to the Cabinet at this time, it appeared that, after providing amply for the home defence and our foreign possessions, a force of 60,000 native British troops might be spared for active operations, which, with the addition of Hanoverian troops, might easily be raised to 70,000 or 80,000 men.* All experience has taught us that such an army was capable, in a single field, of combating the whole force which Napoleon could collect. It equalled the strength of either army at Austerlitz, Jena, or Eylau. The opinion, therefore, generally entertained of the weakness of the British on land, and of their inability to contend, on that element, with the French, was founded on misapprehension. It arose from the niggardly use hitherto made of the British forces by land, from the military inexperience of the Government. Mr Pitt, with all his talents, had never seen this great truth, and thence the bad success hitherto of his military operations. They had been almost entirely confined to little expeditions of three or four thousand men each, to pick up sugar islands, or excite a momentary alarm on the enemy's coasts. Lord Castlereagh was the first to perceive, and the first to evince in practice, the vast advantage which

* The following official state of the British army when this Continental expedition was resolved on (21st October 1805), is of value both as a historical document, and as bearing on the present and future security of the British islands:—Excluding India,

Total rank and file, artillery and militia,	256,609
Of which at home,	181,447
Foreign stations,	75,162

The general distribution, supposing 50,000 men were taken for active service abroad, would stand thus:—

At home, regulars,	55,251
„ militia,	74,749
	130,000
Remain for foreign possessions,	63,000
Active operations,	63,000

Which force of 63,000 might, it is presumed, before spring, receive an addition of 10,000 Hanoverians, in which case the active army, after fully providing for the foreign possessions and home defence, will exceed 70,000 men.—Lord Castlereagh's *Minute for the Cabinet, October* 21, 1805.—*Castlereagh Correspondence*, vi. 28.

an insular power enjoyed, which, itself from its situation beyond the reach of attack, and with a navy capable of conveying them to any point of the enemy's coasts, had 60,000 admirable troops at its disposal, to co-operate with the allied forces on the Continent, or distract the enemy's attention by separate attacks. Such a body was equivalent to at least 120,000 chained to the slow and oppressive operation of land marching. There was no Continental war which, properly directed, it might not determine in favour of the Allies. Lord Castlereagh clearly perceived, and embodied in a very able Cabinet minute, these views, but unfortunately they were in advance of his age. They were directly adverse to the principles of the Whigs, who soon after succeeded to power; and, during the nicely-balanced campaign which followed in Poland, they were not acted upon. The battle of Friedland and treaty of Tilsit were the consequence.*

56. Magnitude of Lord Castlereagh's propositions already made.

The preparations made by Lord Castlereagh for supporting the common cause in the north of Germany, if the contest had continued, were on a very extended scale, and amply justified the sanguine views which he entertained as to the efficiency of a powerful body of British troops acting together, and judiciously thrown in on the theatre of Continental warfare. From a memorandum made out by him, on 29th December, of the late armaments, it appeared that 12,000 men had sailed from the Downs on or before the 5th November, and arrived safe

* In the Cabinet minute above quoted, Lord Castlereagh said—"Lord Castlereagh has not thought it necessary to delay submitting the above to the consideration of his Majesty's servants till the line which the Court of Berlin means to pursue shall be finally disclosed. The system of Prussia may influence materially the course of our future military operations; but war on the Continent having now actually commenced, and thereby a prospect being opened to this country of employing its arms offensively, whether we act separately or conjointly—whether our efforts be directed to operations on a large or on a limited scale—whether to objects strictly Continental, or to those more pointedly British—the measure of rendering our active force disposable at the shortest notice, and of placing it in a condition to move as a whole, should its services be called for, seems in every view expedient."—LORD CASTLEREAGH'S *Minute for the Cabinet, October* 30, 1805; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, vi. 28, 29.

CHAP. II. 1805.

in the Elbe. A second expedition, also of 12,000 men, sailed from Cork on 29th October, but from contrary winds could only sail from the Downs on the 10th December, and was forced to put back by adverse weather, and so did not reach its destination till the 25th December. The cavalry and artillery, 6000 strong, sailed on the 28th November, and arrived safe on 4th December. Altogether, not less than 34,000 men, of all arms, had sailed from England, and arrived safe in Northern Germany in the months of November and December. The last division, indeed, was very late of arriving, but that was owing to no tardiness in preparation, but to adverse winds, against which, *at that time*, nautical skill had not the means of prevailing, for it embarked at Cork in the end of October. Had Prussia remained faithful to her engagements, and Austria not rushed headlong on destruction at Austerlitz, this powerful reinforcement would have appeared in ample time to act with decisive effect on the great theatre of military operations; for it appears from authentic instruments that, so late as the 13th December, five days after the issue of the battle of Austerlitz was known at Berlin, the Cabinet there was resolved still to act on the convention of 3d November with Russia, and "that the Prussian army would enter Bohemia on the 21st December, and proceed by the shortest road to the flank and rear of the French army."*

* "Three official letters of the 13th of December, from the Austrian minister at Berlin to Count Stahremberg, state that the news of the battle of Austerlitz was received at Berlin on the 8th, and that a Council of State was assembled in consequence thereof on the 9th; that it was resolved to send Colonel Pfühl, the King's aide-de-camp, to the combined armies, in order to agree upon a plan of operation with the two Emperors; that orders would be sent to Count Haugwitz, at Vienna, not to deviate in the least from his instructions grounded on the convention of Potsdam, of the 3d of November, the term of which has already expired on the 11th December; and that the Prussian army would enter Bohemia on the 21st December, and proceed by the shortest road to the flank and rear of the French army. On the moment of Colonel Pfühl's being ready to leave Berlin, a letter from Count Haugwitz, dated Vienna, the 6th, brought the most malignant exaggeration of the events at Austerlitz, as well as of the armistice, complaining, moreover, of the Austrian plenipotentiary's departure from Vienna, whom he supposed to be going to sign a separate peace. This brought every

CHAP. II. 1805.

The battle of Austerlitz, followed, as it soon after was, by the treaty of Presburg between France and Austria, virtually dissolved the alliance; for it left Russia and Sweden alone, on continental Europe, to continue the contest. There can be no doubt that it was the tergiversation of Prussia which mainly brought about this disastrous pacification; for, calamitous as had been the result of the battle of Austerlitz, nothing was yet decided, and, had the beaten army simply retreated into Hungary, and allowed the Archduke Charles, and the Prussian army, to fall on the enemy's communication, the conqueror would have been brought into the most imminent danger. Prussia ran no risk in so doing; for, supported by Russia in rear, and the Anglo-Hanoverian army on her right, she was more than a match for France. But when Prussia drew back, and concluded a separate treaty with France on 15th December, Austria had no alternative but to do the best she could for her separate interests, which she did by signing the treaty of Presburg on the 27th. Mr Fox, in fervid, but not undeserved language, characterised the conduct of the Cabinet of Berlin on this occasion in Parliament. "The conduct of Prussia," said he, "has been a union of everything that is contemptible in servility, with everything that is odious in rapacity. Other nations may have been reduced by the fortune of war to cede many of their provinces; but none, except Prussia, has been reduced to the lowest stage of degradation, that of being compelled to become the ministers of the rapacity and injustice of a master." [1]

57. Peace of Presburg. Dec. 27, 1805.

[1] Parl. Deb. vi. 891; Hardenberg, ix. 50-59.

Great as was the importance of this treaty to conti-

former arrangement to a momentary stagnation. However, upon the most active remonstrances of the Austrian and Russian ministers, and on receiving another despatch from the Prussian minister, Finkenstein, dated Teschen, 8th of December, it was at last resolved that nothing should be changed in the decision of the last Council of State, and Colonel Pfühl set off accordingly."—LORD CASTLEREAGH *to the* DUKE OF YORK, *Jan.* 3, 1806; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, vi. 102. Such were the extraordinary vacillations of the Court of Berlin at this time, which ended by ratifying Count Haugwitz's treaty of alliance with Napoleon, and declaring war against Great Britain!

CHAP. II.

1806.

nental Europe, its influence was considerably lessened by an event which happened soon after in Great Britain. This was the death of Mr Pitt, which took place in the neighbourhood of London on 23d January 1806. He had long been in a declining state of health, and had in vain sought relief from the waters of Bath; and upon a frame thus exhausted the news of the battle of Austerlitz fell with crushing severity. He saw in it the ruin of all his hopes. After a melancholy survey of the map of Europe, he turned away, saying, "Henceforth we may close that map for half a century," and, a few days after, expired, not less the victim of patriotic duty than the soldier who dies on the field of battle. But the event proved that he had entertained too desponding a view of the fortunes of his country, and had not sufficiently appreciated the strength of the principle of resurrection against oppression which was destined to arise from the effects of the very treaty which he deplored as so calamitous. He left his mantle to a worthy successor; and, before ten years had elapsed, his hopes were more than realised, and the whole objects for which he had contended had been attained.[1]

58. Death of Mr Pitt. Jan. 23, 1806.

[1] Gifford's Life of Pitt, iii. 347-360.

59. Change of Ministry, and accession of the Whigs to power. Jan. 28.

But, though destined to triumph in the end, the principles of Mr Pitt received a rude, and, to appearance, a fatal shock, in the commencement, from his death. The remainder of the Tory party felt themselves unequal to the task of forming an Administration. Lord Hawkesbury, to whom the Premiership was offered, declined the onerous task of forming a Ministry; and, indeed, the crisis was such that it required a very strong party, in point of numbers as well as ability, to meet it. A new Government was formed, composed entirely of the Whigs, under the auspices of Mr Fox and Lord Granville.* The former was really, though not in form, the

* The composition of the Whig Ministry was as follows:—Lord Chancellor, Lord Erskine; President of the Council, Earl Fitzwilliam; First Lord of the Treasury, Lord Granville; Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lord Henry Petty

head of the Administration, though he held only the subordinate situation of Secretary for Foreign Affairs. In reality, however, this was the most important situation in the Cabinet at this crisis; for the Whigs had so uniformly condemned the war as unnecessary and unjust, that an immediate change of policy was looked for on their accession to power, and the entire pacification of Europe was anticipated from their exertions. Lord Castlereagh, of course, quitted office with his political friends, and his efforts during the short period that the other party was in power were confined to a very active and energetic opposition, in which Mr Perceval and he took the lead, the one taking the department of domestic, the other of foreign affairs. The chief points on which the Opposition exerted themselves were in resisting the new plan of finance brought forward by Lord Henry Petty, which is memorable as the first step towards the encroachment on the sinking fund, and Mr Windham's new scheme for recruiting the army by enlistment for limited service. On both these occasions Lord Castlereagh stood prominently forward, and, without aspiring to the palm of eloquence, evinced such powers of argument and debate as raised him much in the opinion of the House and of the country. But, important as these topics were, it was not on them that the attention of the nation was fixed. Foreign affairs, the means of resisting the colossal power of Napoleon, were the universal objects of interest, and it was to them that the mind of the nation was turned with the most intense anxiety. As the system of Mr Fox was to abstain altogether from Continental interference, and, if possible, bring the war to an immediate conclusion, which principles were embraced by a considerable and highly respectable portion of the com-

(Lansdowne); Foreign Affairs, Mr Fox; Home Office, Earl Spencer; War and Colonies, Mr Windham; Lord Privy Seal, Lord Sidmouth; First Lord of the Admiralty, Lord Howick; Master-General of the Ordnance, Earl Moira; Chief Justice, with a seat in the Cabinet, Lord Ellenborough.—*Annual Register*, 1806, p. 26.

CHAP. II. 1806.

munity, it is fortunate that he became invested with power, and in a situation to bring them to the test of experience. The history of the next two years is a commentary, by way of contrast, upon those of Mr Pitt and Lord Castlereagh.*

60. Mr Fox in vain endeavours to make peace.

Mr Fox's projects, though entered upon in good faith, and with a sincere desire of adjustment, led to no result. Lord Lauderdale was sent to Paris with the proposals of the English Government, but, after a long negotiation, it was found impossible to come to terms, and the conferences were broken off. Italy was the ostensible ground of rupture; but it was the pretext merely: the real cause was the irreconcilable difference between the pretensions of the Powers. France was not disposed to stop short in the career of Continental aggrandisement, in which she had hitherto been so successful, and openly aspired to the unlimited command of Italy; Great Britain was not sufficiently humbled to submit to such pretensions, and thus a continuance of the war became unavoidable. The details of this negotiation, in which Lord Castlereagh had no part, are foreign to this biography: suffice it to say, that it entirely failed in its object, and that the great and eloquent peace advocate closed his life honourably for himself, by nailing the nation's colours to the mast. But the fact is important, as indicating how unavoidable, from the aspiring views of France, the contest had become, since its most decided opponent, when invested with the means of closing, was obliged to continue it.

61. Failure of the warlike expeditions of the Whig Government.

If the failure of Lord Lauderdale's pacific mission, and of Mr Fox's efforts to terminate the war, illustrate the wisdom of Mr Pitt's and Lord Castlereagh's policy in continuing it, the result of the military measures of the Whig Government demonstrate not less clearly the justice

* Lord Castlereagh's arguments on the Finance Question will be found in *Parliamentary Debates*, viii. 1004-1018, and on Mr Windham's Military System in the same work, vi. 652-676, and 967-990.

of the combination which the latter formed for its prosecution. His system, as already shown, was to hold 60,000 British troops available for Continental operations, and, *without dividing them*, to throw them in in that quarter where the opposing parties were nearly balanced, so that they might act with decisive effect. This was the system on which he had begun to act in the close of 1805, when the contest was for the time cut short by the battle of Austerlitz. The Prussian war ensued in the autumn of the following year; and the battle of Jena punished the rashness, following on a long course of vacillation, with which the Cabinet of Berlin had undertaken that struggle. In the course of the winter which followed, however, the scales again hung even between the contending parties. For the first time in his life, Napoleon was defeated at Eylau, in a pitched battle, and retreated, with terrible loss, from the neighbourhood of Königsberg to Warsaw. There cannot be a doubt that if Lord Castlereagh's system had then been acted upon, and 50,000 English troops, landed in the north of Germany, had formed the nucleus, with Hanoverian reinforcements, of an army of 70,000 men, placed directly on the line of the French communications, the indecision of Austria would have been terminated; a similar army would have been formed on its side, and Napoleon have been destroyed. The Government, however, faithful to the opposition principle of changing everything, went into the other extreme, and, instead of concentrating an imposing force to act on the French communications when hard pressed by the Russians in Poland, refused to send either a man or a guinea to aid the Emperor Alexander in his heroic struggle, but sent out instead little eccentric expeditions in every direction: one to the Dardanelles, without either adequate force or preparation, to undergo defeat before Constantinople; one to Egypt, to perish under the charges of the Mameluke cavalry; and one under Whitelocke, to the Rio de la Plata, to incur unheard-of disgrace in Buenos

CHAP. II. 1807.

Ayres.* A more deplorable division of force at the decisive moment is not recorded in history; for, beyond all doubt, if the forces thus wasted in desultory and eccentric operations had been concentrated in the proper quarter, they would have brought the war to a glorious termination in this very year.

* In the *Castlereagh Correspondence* is to be found a very interesting letter, from the Hon. Captain Blackwood of the Ajax, to Lord Castlereagh, which throws great light on the unfortunate expedition to the Dardanelles, under Sir John Duckworth. "To-morrow we sail, under the command of Sir John Duckworth, with five sail of the line and two bombs, to join Sir Thomas Louis off the Dardanelles, who has three sail of the line and two frigates waiting our arrival, to attempt to force the passage of the Dardanelles, hitherto considered as impassable, push up to Constantinople, and there endeavour not only to awe the Porte into concessions to Russia, but to give us up her navy to take care of till we have a peace with France, and to send Sebastiani away from Constantinople —terms which I cannot see how so limited a force as we have ought to expect to obtain, particularly as we have not a land-troop to take possession of and hold the forts in the Dardanelles, or a single resource within ourselves more than cruising ships generally have. At all events, if we do gain them, it will be more owing to the character and fear the Turks entertain of our navy, than to any physical advantage such a force can have over a nation possessing such strong posts, with as many men as they choose to call for, so many ships in readiness, and with such entire resources as they have within themselves; whilst we, shut up in the Sea of Marmora, cannot have any. It is, however, our duty, whether we succeed or not, to make the attempt; and, so far, if I may judge by the promptness with which Sir John Duckworth appears to act, we are fortunate in having him as the chief. I cannot, however, be blind to the difficulties of the undertaking; and that, if the Ottoman Government acts with any vigour, they may not only set our utmost efforts at defiance, but also render our situation in the Sea of Marmora a very perilous one.

"Government, however, thinks so differently, that their orders to Lord Collingwood were to send only five sail of the line in place of eight, which latter his Lordship, not so entirely despising our enemy, sent; with which, if we had 5000 troops, some more bombs, and store-ships to supply exigencies, and to possess ourselves of the forts in the Dardanelles, or destroy the works, which would be preferable, as it would leave that force disposable; and, so long as we keep the command by sea, the Turks could not repair their works or replace their guns; consequently, the communication kept open. None of these points, however, which I feel persuaded your Lordship will agree with me ought to have been attended to, seem in any shape to have been weighed; we shall therefore have to take the bull by the horns, which now, from the armament caused by the Russian war, I conceive will be the more formidable. . . .

"Our ships are uncommonly fine ones; and as the admirals and captains have generally seen service, it will not be arrogant to anticipate as much success as such a force has a right to expect. Though forcing so strong a passage as I understand the Dardanelles are, is a very serious undertaking—so much so, that the Russians have hitherto, under the impression of its impossibility, never dared to attempt it—yet, were these passages the only difficulty, I conceive that, aided by a fresh wind, they may be surmounted. But what, according to the view I have of the service, and what ought to be provided against, is how, after our

The services of Lord Castlereagh, however, were soon required for more important public duties than forming one of an active Opposition by whom the measures of Government were watched. The reign of the Whig Ministry was not of long duration. They split upon the rock which had proved fatal to Mr Pitt's Administration in 1801, and had more or less influence in the dissolution

62. Fall of the Whig Cabinet, and return of Lord Castlereagh to power.

arrival off Constantinople, without any additional ordnance, in the face of batteries well placed on all sides, a superior fleet, who, though they may decline coming out to fight us, would be ready and fully equal to seize any advantage the batteries might gain over us in the loss of masts and yards, which must be calculated on—how, without masts, ships, or cordage, to replace deficiencies, we are to succeed in bringing the Turks to our terms, is an enigma difficult to be solved; add to which, whether successful or not, we must hold in view the means of retreat: but possibly Government holds information that if our squadron does but appear no resistance will be made; which, though it will leave us no laurels to gain, I wish may be true. Of this, however, I feel persuaded, that if such information is not in the hands of Government, it must be more owing to the supineness and ignorance of our enemy in applying the ample means of resistance they have, than to anything eight sail of the line, two frigates, and two bombs can do. I wish that the genius of Lord Nelson would, in this arduous task before us, assist the judgment of Sir John Duckworth, which, with every deference due to his talents, I think the service would be benefited by."—CAPTAIN BLACKWOOD *to* LORD CASTLEREAGH, *Feb.* 2, 1807; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, vi. 155-157. This letter is very remarkable, for it is an exact anticipation *ab ante* of the events which so soon ensued. The expedition, as Captain Blackwood had foreseen, forced the passage of the Dardanelles, but failed in the Sea of Marmora in effecting the object of the expedition, from the cause he had pointed out. Captain Blackwood's own ship, the Ajax, was consumed by accidental fire a few days before entering the Straits.

On March 6, off the Dardanelles, Captain Blackwood again wrote to Lord Castlereagh:—"On the 18th February we succeeded, with no very great loss, in not only forcing the passage of the Dardanelles, strongly defended by ships as well as batteries, and in the most formidable parts not more than a mile and a quarter wide, but also in burning the whole of the former. We repassed the Dardanelles yesterday, having succeeded, I may confidently say, in no one object but that of convincing the Turks a British squadron could force the passage; by which they have so entirely found out their weak points of defence, that I am inclined to think no other squadron will ever effect the same again; and that, had we not availed ourselves at the period we did of the means of retreat, such was the increase of batteries, that in one week more I question whether some would have succeeded in getting back; and as it was, many have got most roughly handled by the immense stone shot, weighing from 300 to 800 lb. each."—*Castlereagh Correspondence*, vi. 161.

Sir John Duckworth, in a memorandum relative to this expedition, said—"If it had been thought proper to join with the expedition a body of troops sufficient to have occupied the Chersonesus, the fortifications of the Dardanelles could have been destroyed; and, being assured at all events of a safe retreat, Sir John Duckworth might have gone to the greatest extremes."—SIR JOHN DUCKWORTH; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, vi. 167.

CHAP. II. 1807.

of every Cabinet down to the settlement of the question in 1829. The Whig Ministry, desirous of following out their principles, and deeming it of essential importance to unite the sympathies of the whole country in the single-handed contest in which they were now engaged, brought forward a bill, the object of which was to open the higher situations in the army and navy to persons of the Catholic persuasion, without making any change on their eligibility to either House of Parliament. The draft of the bill, which related to other matters connected with the two services as well as this, was submitted to his Majesty in the usual way by the Cabinet; but his attention was not specially drawn to the change it was meant to effect in this particular, and he seems to have been unconscious of what was intended. No sooner, however, did he become aware, from the debates on the subject in the House of Commons, of the tendency of the bill in this respect, than he expressed his repugnance to it in the strongest terms, declaring that he had not previously been made aware of the existence of any such clause in the bill, and that no consideration whatever would induce him to give his consent to it. Finding the King thus determined, and on a subject on which they were well aware his conscientious convictions were so strong that there was no chance of this being modified or removed, the Ministers agreed to give up the point, and in the mean time withdraw the obnoxious clause from the bill. But this did not satisfy the King, whose religious scruples were now thoroughly awakened; and, dreading a renewal of the attempt to compel him to surrender his opinion, he required from his Ministers a written pledge that they would never again bring forward any such proposal. To this proposal, which in effect was to tie up their hands on this important subject during the whole remainder of the King's reign, the Cabinet conceived that they could not, in consistency with their known opinions, accede; and the consequence was, that they were informed their services were no longer re-

quired. An entire change of Ministry ensued—the new one being composed exclusively of the Tory party—Mr Perceval being First Lord of the Treasury, and Lord Castlereagh again restored to his arduous duties as Secretary at War.* CHAP. II. 1807.

* The following was the composition of the new Cabinet:—President of the Council, Earl Camden; Lord Chancellor, Lord Eldon; Lord Privy Seal, Earl of Westmoreland; First Lord of the Treasury, Duke of Portland; Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr Perceval; Home Secretary, Lord Hawkesbury; Foreign Secretary, Mr Canning; War and Colonies, Lord Castlereagh; President of the Board of Trade, Earl Bathurst; First Lord of the Admiralty, Lord Mulgrave; Master-General of the Ordnance, Earl of Chatham. Not in Cabinet:—Secretary at War, Sir James Pulteney; President of Board of Control, Mr Dundas; Vice-President of Board of Trade, Mr Rose; Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, Duke of Richmond.

"The King considers this struggle as for his throne; and he told me but yesterday, when I took the Great Seal, that he did so consider—that he must be the Protestant king of a Protestant country, or no king. He is remarkably well, firm as a lion, placid and quick beyond example in any moment of his life. The late Ministers are satisfied that the King—whose state of mind they were always doubting—has more sense than all the Ministers put together—they leave him with a full conviction of that fact."—LORD ELDON *to* REV. DR TWISS, *April* 1, 1807; CAMPBELL'S *Lives of Chancellors*, vii. 207.

CHAPTER III.

LORD CASTLEREAGH FROM HIS RESTORATION TO THE WAR OFFICE IN APRIL 1807 TO HIS RESIGNATION OF IT IN SEPTEMBER 1809.

CHAP. III.

1807.

1. New Tory Administration, in which Lord Castlereagh is again Secretary for War. April 8, 1807.

WHEN the Tories were restored to power, which was on the 8th April, the affairs of the Continent were in a very critical state; but the period of decisive co-operation on the part of the British Government had passed. Hostilities on an extended scale were imminent, but it was too late to send a British expedition out, in time either to take part in them, or effect a diversion in favour of the Russian arms. The first care of the new Ministry was to resume the project of co-operation on an extended scale, and *en masse*, with the Russians, who had maintained through the winter so heroic a struggle with the superior forces of Napoleon; and if these efforts had been made two months before, when the intelligence of the battle of Eylau arrived, they might have been attended with decisive effect; for the scales of war then hung even between the contending parties, and 30,000 British troops thrown into the balance would, beyond a doubt, have inclined it to the allied side. As it was, not a day was lost by Mr Canning and Lord Castlereagh in reversing the policy of their predecessors, and sending immediate succours to the allied powers.[1] So early as April 2, before they had even taken their seats in Parliament as Ministers, they despatched £100,000 in money to the King of Prussia, which was immediately followed

April 2.

[1] Parl. Deb. x. 103, 104; Hard. ix. 297, 298.

by £200,000 worth of military stores; and earnest negotiations were set on foot to concert vigorous measures for the prosecution of the war.

2. Treaties in consequence concluded with the allied powers.

This change of policy on the part of the British Government was immediately followed by treaties, calculated, if the war had lasted, to have effected an important change in its fortunes. One was signed at Bartenstein in East Prussia, on the 25th of April, between Russia and Prussia, by which it was stipulated that neither of the contracting parties should make peace without the concurrence of the other; that the Confederation of the Rhine should be dissolved, and a new confederacy of the German powers formed under their natural protectors, Austria and Prussia; that the Cabinet of Vienna should be requested to accede to this treaty, and, in the event of their doing so, the Austrian dominions should be restored to what they had been in 1805, so as to extend in Italy to the Mincio, and include the Tyrol in Germany; and that England should be invited to accede, and furnish arms, ammunition, and money to the belligerent powers, and disembark a strong auxiliary force at the mouth of the Elbe to co-operate with the Swedes and menace the flank and rear of the French army, while Austria operated on its communications, and Russia and Prussia engaged it in front. Sweden had, six days before, agreed to employ 12,000 men in Pomerania. Great Britain formally gave in her adhesion on 17th June, and engaged to send 20,000 men as soon as possible to Stralsund to co-operate with the Swedes; and, on the 23d of the same month, a relative agreement was concluded between Great Britain and Sweden, by which the Swedish contingent was to be raised to 18,000, and taken entirely into British pay, and the whole conditions of the alliance of 11th April 1805 were renewed. Soon after a treaty was signed between Great Britain and Prussia, by which the former engaged to furnish a subsidy of £1,000,000 for the

April 25.

April 19.

June 17.

CHAP. III.

1807.

campaign of 1807, with the promise of further succours, if necessary, to carry into full effect the provisions of the Convention of Bartenstein. Thus was Lord Castlereagh's project for the winter campaign of 1805 so rudely obstructed by the battle of Austerlitz, again in course of being carried into execution, and the foundation laid for a grand alliance, which, if it could have been held together, would, beyond all doubt, have put a bridle in the mouth of France, and restored independence to Europe. And it was observed with just pride by Mr Canning, that "It was not the least honourable part of these transactions to Great Britain, that the treaty with Prussia was signed when that power was almost bereft of its possessions, and agreed to by Frederick-William in the only large town that remained to him of his once extensive dominions."[1]

[1] Martin, viii. 603; Schoell, ix. 141; Parl. Deb. ix. 974, and x. 102, 103.

3. But the succour is promised too late to save from Friedland and Tilsit.

But this change of system came too late to counterbalance the disasters which had been incurred, or assuage the ill feeling which had been produced. Alexander had been profoundly irritated by the ill-judged refusal of the British Cabinet to guarantee a loan he was desirous of negotiating, after the battle of Eylau, in London, and by the desertion of his cause by Great Britain, the power of all others most interested in asserting its independence.*

* "The firmness and perseverance with which his Majesty, during eight months, maintained and defended a cause common to all sovereigns, are the most certain pledges of the intentions which animated him, as well as of the purity and loyalty of his principles. Never would his Imperial Majesty have thought of deviating from that system which he has hitherto pursued, if he had been supported by a real assistance on the part of his allies. But having, from the separation of Austria and England, found himself reduced to his own resources, having to combat with his own means the immense military forces which France has at her disposal, he was authorised in believing that, in continuing to sacrifice himself for others, he might ultimately come to compromise the fate of his own empire. The conduct of the British Government in later times has been of a kind completely to justify the determination which his Majesty has now taken. The diversion on the Continent which England so long promised has not to this day taken place; and even if, as the latest advices from London show, the British Government has at length resolved on sending 10,000 men to Pomerania, that succour is nowise proportioned either to the hopes we were authorised to entertain, or the importance of the object to which these troops were destined. Pecuniary succours might, in

Ignorance of the entire change of policy adopted by the Whigs led him to believe that England had stood aloof because she was determined *never again* to incur the hazards of Continental warfare; and he had no confidence in the change of Ministry producing any alteration in this selfish insular policy. The transport service had been *totally dismantled* since the Whigs came into office —a wretched economy, which saved only £4000 a-month, and disabled Great Britain from sending any succours to the Continent till it was restored, which could not be effected for two months. Thus the precious interval, big with the fate of Europe and the world, was allowed to pass, without any effort being practicable on the part of Great Britain to aid the common cause; and during that time the most disastrous events had occurred on the Continent. Russia and Prussia, left to themselves, were crushed at Friedland; the negotiations at Tilsit followed; and the Emperor of Russia, soured by and deeply hurt at his desertion, during the most critical period of the struggle, by Great Britain, attended very naturally only to his separate interests, and concluded a treaty in many respects advantageous to himself, but to the last degree disastrous to Europe and Great Britain. The 20,000 men whom Great Britain had engaged to send out, could not, in consequence of these circumstances, sail from the

some degree, have compensated the want of English troops; but not only did the British Government decline facilitating the loan which the Imperial Court had intended to negotiate in London, but when it did at length resolve upon making some advances, it appeared that the sum destined for this, so far from meeting the exigences of the Allies, would not even have covered the indispensable expenses of Prussia. In fine, the use which England, instead of co-operating in the common cause, has made of its forces in South America and in Egypt—the latter of which was not even communicated to the Imperial Cabinet, and was entirely at variance with its interests, at a time when, by giving them a different destination, the necessity of maintaining a Russian army on the Danube might have been prevented, and the disposable force on the Vistula proportionally increased—sufficiently demonstrates that the Emperor of Russia was virtually released from his engagements, and had no course left but to attend to the security of his own dominions."—*Note*, GENERAL BUDBERG *to* LORD LEVESON GOWER, *Tilsit, June* 30, 1807; *Parliamentary Debates*, v. 111, 112.

CHAP. III.

1807. July 27. July 14.

British harbours till the end of July, a fortnight *after* the treaty of Tilsit had been signed, and the subjugation of the Continent, to all appearance, irrevocably effected. Despatched, as Lord Castlereagh would have done had the transports not been all dismantled or dispersed by his predecessors, in the middle of April, they would have turned the tide at Friedland, and terminated the war eight years before it actually closed. That saving of £48,000 by the Whig Ministry at this time has lost Great Britain at least £400,000,000 sterling.[1] *

[1] Parl. Deb. ix. 1035, 1036; Hard. ix. 425.

4. The secret articles of Tilsit become known to the British Ministry.

Although, however, the expedition under Lord Cathcart arrived on the shores of the Continent too late, from these causes, to avert the catastrophe of Friedland and subjugation of Tilsit, yet it did come in time to effect a most important advantage for the separate interests of England, and disarrange, in an essential particular, the French Emperor's long-laid plans for our subjugation. To unite the whole naval forces of continental Europe in a league against Great Britain was the grand object of his policy; and he calculated that by so doing he might, taking the French ships of the line at sixty, accumulate in a few years one hundred and eighty sail, to wrest from England

* "When the new Ministry came into office," said Mr Canning, then Foreign Minister, "on July 31, 1807, they found the transport system totally dismantled. This originated in the economical system of Lord H. Petty; but it was a false economy, evidently calculated, at no distant period, to render necessary a profuse expenditure. The mandate of dismissal came from the Treasury, and was applicable to all transports but those necessary to maintain the communication with Ireland, Jersey, and Guernsey. The saving produced by this order did not amount to more than £4000 a-month; and it dispersed 60,000 tons of shipping, left by the preceding Ministry to their successors. Ministers thus, in the beginning of April last, had not a transport at their disposal; and, from the active state of trade at the time, it required several months before they could be collected. If they had existed, a military force would in that very month have been sent out, and 20,000 British troops would have turned the scale at Friedland. This ill-judged economy was the more criminal that, by having a fleet of transports constantly at command, and threatening various points, 20,000 men could easily paralyse three times that number of the enemy. The Whigs had apparently parted with their transport force for no other purpose but to register their abandonment of the Continent." These facts Mr Windham, on the part of the Whig Government, did not deny, alleging only that "*the absurdity of sending British troops to the Continent required no reply.*"—*Parliamentary Debates*, ix. 1035-1038.

the sceptre of the ocean. Then, and not till then, did he intend, having gained the command of the Channel, to carry into effect the invasion of the British Islands. As the Danish fleet consisted of twenty ships of the line, manned by admirable sailors, it was of essential consequence to the project to obtain possession of it as soon as possible, and the plan fallen upon to give this design the appearance of justice was this: It was agreed between France and Russia that the mediation of the former power should be offered to adjust the differences of the latter with the Cabinet of St James; and in the event of the mediation not being accepted, Russia was to make common cause with Napoleon with all its forces by sea and land: "Or," in M. Bignon's words, "if, having accepted the mediation, peace was not concluded by the 1st November, on terms stipulating that the flags of every power should enjoy a perfect and entire equality on every sea, and that all the conquests made from French possessions since 1805 should be restored—in that case also, Russia shall demand a categorical answer by the 1st December, and the Russian ambassador shall receive a conditional order to quit London. And in the event of the English Government not having made a satisfactory answer to the Russian requisitions, France and Russia shall *jointly summon the three Courts of Copenhagen, Stockholm, and Lisbon* to close their harbours against English vessels, recall their ambassadors from London, and declare war against Great Britain." In return for these advantages, it was agreed that the families of the houses of Bourbon and Braganza should be replaced in the Spanish peninsula by princes of the family of Napoleon; and the Ottoman empire was to be partitioned—Wallachia, Moldavia, and Bulgaria being allotted to Russia —while *Greece, Macedonia, and the whole sea-coast of Dalmatia, should be ceded to France.* To evince her gratitude for so many concessions, France engaged to throw no obstacles in the way of the Russians acquiring

CHAP. III. 1807.

Finland from Sweden, and became bound by no act, direct or indirect, to augment the Grand-duchy of Warsaw, or do anything which might lead to the re-establishment of the kingdom of Poland.*

5. Copenhagen expedition, and capture of the Danish fleet.

"Scarcely," says Lord Londonderry, "had the disastrous campaign of the allied sovereigns of Russia and Prussia against France in 1807 been terminated in the month of July by the peace of Tilsit, when the British Government found means to obtain positive information of the hostile plans projected against this country. Russia, unfortunately, acceded to the Continental System of Napoleon, and engaged to assist in compelling the minor powers, and even Austria herself, to pursue a like course. It was discovered that one of the first objects of France would be to secure the Danish fleet. A powerful armament was in consequence equipped with extraordinary despatch; and its commanders, Lords Cathcart and Gambier, were instructed to demand the surrender of all the ships of war, upon an engagement that they should be restored to Denmark on the conclusion of a general peace. The Danish Government having rejected all proposals for an amicable accommodation, the British army invested Copenhagen; and, after the city had sustained a bombardment of three days, from the 2d to the 5th of September, a capitulation was concluded, and all the ships of war, with the naval stores of every kind in the royal arsenals, were given up to the British forces, which, early in October, returned to England with their prizes."[1] The fleet thus taken and extricated from the grasp of the enemy was very large, and its loss was the first great blow which the ambitious designs of Napoleon received.[2] It consisted of eighteen sail of the line, fifteen frigates, six brigs, and twenty-five gunboats, besides two sail of the line and

[1] Castlereagh Corresp. vi. 168.

[2] Lord Gambier's Desp; Ann. Reg. 1807, 698, 699.

* These secret articles of the treaty of Tilsit are given on the authority of M. Bignon, long the French ambassador at Berlin—to whom Napoleon bequeathed, with a large legacy, the task of writing the diplomatic history of his reign, which he has done in his elaborate work in fourteen volumes—and of M. Thiers, in his admirable *History of the Consulate and the Empire*.—See BIGNON, vi. 336, and v. 347, 348; and THIERS, *Consulat et l'Empire*, vii. 648, 649, and viii. 449, 450.

three frigates which were destroyed as not being worth removal. The victory was unprecedented. Trafalgar itself could not present so splendid an array of prizes. The naval stores brought away were of proportional magnitude; and the guns taken, including those mounted on the ramparts and praams, were 3500.

§ 6. Great impression produced by this stroke in Europe.

"Blood and fire," said Napoleon, when the intelligence of the event reached Paris, "have made the English masters of Copenhagen." The imperial conqueror might well vent his wrath against the authors of this vigorous step, for it deprived him of half the fruit he expected to derive from the victory of Friedland. Crippled by twenty sail of the line in the naval forces which he expected to array against Great Britain in Northern Europe, an immediate assault was out of the question. The slower method of blockade could alone be resorted to. His original plan was to have attacked England with one hundred and eighty sail of the line, among whom the Danish fleet was taken at fifteen; but the capture of that fleet disconcerted this project, and the Continental blockade was resorted to in a more stringent manner than ever.* The Milan decree against British commerce, which

* "After Russia," says General Jomini, speaking in the person of Napoleon, "had joined my alliance, Prussia, as a matter of course, followed her example; Portugal, Sweden, and the Pope, alone required to be gained over, for we were well aware that Denmark would hasten to throw herself into our arms. If England refused the proffered mediation of Russia, the whole maritime forces of the Continentals were to be employed against her, and they would muster one hundred and eighty sail of the line.* In a few years this force could be raised to two hundred and fifty. With the aid of such a fleet and of my numerous flotilla, it was by no means impossible to lead a European army to London. One hundred sail of the line employed against her colonies in the two hemispheres would have sufficed to have drawn off a large portion of the British navy, while eighty more assembled in the Channel would have sufficed to assure the passage of the flotilla and avenge the outraged rights of nations. Such was my plan at bottom, which only failed of success from the faults committed in the Spanish war."

* Viz.:—

French ships of the line,	. . . .	60
Spanish	do.	40
Russian	do.	25
Swedish	do.	15
Danish	do.	15
Dutch	do.	15
Portuguese	do.	10
		180

—JOMINI, *Vie de Napoléon*, ii. 449.

CHAP. III. 1807.

soon after ensued, was the indication of the change of tactics produced by the taking of Copenhagen. But though the ultimate effect of this vigorous stroke was in the highest degree favourable to Great Britain, yet its immediate results were extremely prejudicial to her interests. Public opinion on the Continent, entirely guided by the enslaved press of France, was almost unanimous against her. Copenhagen had been attacked and the fleet taken without any declaration of war or any angry negotiations before the British pennants appeared off the shores of Zealand. There was ample ground, not only for political declamation but for well-founded complaint, on the face of the transaction, and before the secret articles of the treaty of Tilsit, known to the British Government, were brought to light. Accordingly, they formed the subject of impassioned invective both in Parliament and by a large part of the press in England; and a painful feeling of doubt as to the justification of the measure came to pervade a considerable and respectable portion of society in the British Islands. It was made the subject of debate directly, or on incidental petitions, no less than fourteen times in the next session of Parliament. The following abstract of Lord Castlereagh's defence of the measure will afford the best view of the grounds on which it was vindicated, and of his now matured power as a parliamentary orator.

7. Arguments of Opposition against the expedition.

In the King's speech at the opening of Parliament, the vindication of the expedition was rested on the assertion that Ministers were in possession of the secret articles of the treaty of Tilsit, by which it was stipulated that the Danish fleet was to be employed against this country. "If so," said Mr Ponsonby, the leader of the Opposition, "why are they not produced? It is said that Denmark has always been hostile to this country, and would gladly have yielded up her fleet at the first summons. What grounds are there for such an assertion? True, the ships at Copenhagen were in a certain state of

preparation, but not more so than they have been for the last half-century. Is it probable that Denmark would have risked her East and West India possessions, the island of Zealand itself, and Norway, from an apprehension that Holstein and Jutland would be overrun by French troops? When the Copenhagen expedition set out, there were three hundred and fifty Danish ships in the British harbours, with cargoes worth £2,000,000; and when the British consul applied on the subject to the Chamber of Commerce at the Danish capital, he received an answer that there was not the slightest room for apprehension, as the Danish neutrality was not likely to be disturbed. But even supposing it could be proved beyond a doubt that Buonaparte intended to have seized the fleet at Copenhagen, and had a force at his command adequate for that purpose, as he afterwards did with the fleet at Lisbon, are we to justify our robbery upon the plea that the enemy meditated a similar spoliation, and that it is but fair to be beforehand with him? Is it not a principle of morality, applicable alike to nations and individuals, that one wrong will not justify another, and that, unless in extreme cases, even self-defence will not justify a deviation from the laws and usages of war? Better, far better would it be to have had to combat the Danish fleet manned by disaffected seamen, and fitted out by a reluctant government, than to have as now the fleets of France and Russia to fight manned by the indignant and exasperated sailors of the North."[1]

[1] Parl. Deb. x. 254-267, 355-358.

8. Lord Castlereagh's answer.

To these arguments it was replied by Lord Castlereagh and Mr Canning: "It is needless to ask for additional documents to justify that great and saving measure, the expedition to Copenhagen. It was evident that after the battle of Trafalgar had annihilated all hopes of *present* naval ascendancy, and the victory of Friedland had laid all Continental nations at his feet, all the efforts of Buonaparte would be turned to effect a naval confederacy against Great Britain. Were any proof

CHAP. III. 1807.

necessary to show that such was his object, and that he would pursue it by all the methods in his power, it would be found in the use to which on every occasion he has turned his Continental conquests. Has it not been always to compel the people whom he has subdued to furnish auxiliaries to co-operate with him in hostilities against the nations which still required to be subjugated? Actuated by these motives, is it to be supposed that that profound statesman and consummate general would not proceed in the same manner in carrying out the great object of his life—the destruction of the maritime strength and resources of this country? that after his great land victory, when he had all the Continental nations at his command, he would hesitate to accomplish the inviting object of adding the Danish navy, lying in a manner within his grasp, to his resources?

9. Continued.

"If any doubt could remain on this subject, it would be removed by the open declarations and subsequent conduct of the French Emperor himself. Immediately after the battle of Friedland he announced his intention of uniting all the navies of Europe in one great confederacy against this country; and all his subsequent conduct has been but the carrying out that design. It was not confined to Denmark—it extended also to Portugal: and before the 1st September he publicly demanded of the Portuguese ambassador, in presence of all the envoys of foreign courts, whether he had transmitted his order to the Court of Portugal to shut their ports against the British flag, and confiscate all the property of its subjects within the Portuguese territory; and having done so, he immediately turned to the Danish minister and asked if he had transmitted the same order to his Court. This was done on the 16th August, the very day when the British expedition landed on the coast of Zealand, and before the destination of that armament could have been known. The Cabinet of Lisbon transmitted official intelligence to the Court of Great Britain that a formal demand had

been made on them for the surrender of their fleet and the closing of their harbours against British ships; and upon their failure to comply with the last and most iniquitous of these requisitions, a notice appeared in the *Moniteur* that 'the house of Braganza had ceased to reign.' Can it be doubted after this how it would have fared with the house of Denmark if they had not yielded obedience to a similar mandate?

10. Concluded.

"It is idle to suppose that the Court of Copenhagen could, even with the support of Great Britain, have withstood the united armies of France and Russia ready to pour down upon her. The Great Belt, frozen in winter, would have rendered the seizure of the Danish fleet a matter of certainty. And that fleet of twenty sail of the line, manned by the bold and hardy sailors of the North, would have formed an addition to the already formidable forces of the Continental confederacy, on which England, with all her maritime strength, could not look with indifference. These twenty line-of-battle ships would speedily be joined by those of Russia and Sweden, amounting to at least as many more. The Russian fleet in the Euxine, consisting of twelve line-of-battle ships, has already proceeded to Lisbon to join the Portuguese navy, which, together, will make up twenty ships of the line. Spain could furnish a like number. A maritime force would be united against this country, consisting of fifty sail of the line, drawn from Antwerp, Cherbourg, and Brest, with two wings of forty each, supplied by his northern and southern confederates. Distracted, as even the great navy of Great Britain is, by the necessity of maintaining squadrons in every quarter of the globe to protect her distant possessions, it is certain that she could not produce any force in the Channel at all equal to the enormous weight of enemies thus accumulating against her. The seizure of the Danish fleet, and consequent paralysis of the right wing of the hostile armament, had thus become a matter of absolute necessity.[1] Self-preservation

[1] Parl. Deb. x. 267-287, 310-342, 350-383.

CHAP. III. 1807.

is the first law of nature; and that law loudly called for the Copenhagen expedition, which has so happily paralysed the designs of the confederates in the quarter where they were most formidable—the north seas."*

11. Vindication of the Copenhagen expedition furnished by Napoleon to his historians.

Powerful as these arguments were, and ably as they were enforced by Lord Castlereagh and Mr Canning, it is doubtful if they would, if taken by themselves alone, have satisfied the doubts or stilled the conscience of the nation on this question, so completely had the decisive advantage gained by the measure obliterated the perception of the danger it had removed. But, fortunately for the cause of historic truth, the vindication at length came, and in the most conclusive of all ways, for it was furnished by our enemies. Napoleon's rage knew no bounds when he heard of the success of the expedition, and he affected the utmost indignation at the proceeding;† but his own acts, not less than his words, soon afforded it the best vindication. On the 16th August, as Lord Castlereagh noticed in the House of Commons, he publicly asked the Portuguese minister, in presence of all the ambassadors of Europe at the Tuileries, whether he had transmitted the orders to his Court to close their harbours against the British and join the confederacy against England, and immediately turned to the Danish minister and asked him if he had done the same. Nor did the matter rest on verbal injunctions; for, finding that the Portuguese Government hesitated as to immediate obedience to these mandates, he despatched Junot from Bayonne with a powerful army to seize the fleet, which was only extricated from his grasp by the vigorous measures of the British Government, and the departure

* Ministers were supported on this question by a majority of 253 to 108 in the Commons, and of 105 to 48 in the Peers.—*Parliamentary Debates*, x. 383.

† "The success of the attack on Copenhagen," says Fouché, "was the first derangement of the secret articles of the treaty of Tilsit, in virtue of which the navy of Denmark was to have been at the disposal of France. Since the catastrophe of Paul, I had never seen Napoleon in such a transport of rage. That which struck him most in this vigorous *coup-de-main* was the promptitude and resolution of the English minister."—*Mémoires de Fouché*, ii. 37.

of the royal family of Portugal with the fleet to the Brazils in the spring following. The Russian fleet from the Black Sea, consisting of twelve sail of the line, soon after came through the Mediterranean, and cast anchor in the Tagus, evidently to co-operate in the great naval crusade, where it fell into the hands of the British in consequence of the victory of Vimeira and capitulation of Lisbon. Finally, the chosen historians of Napoleon, M. Bignon and M. Thiers, published the secret articles of the treaty of Tilsit above given, which placed beyond a doubt the intention on the part of the French Emperor to seize the Danish fleet, and rendered the vindication of the expedition complete. And thus had Lord Castlereagh and Mr Canning, in addition to the bold and decisive course which extricated the Danish fleet from the grasp of France, the credit of having magnanimously withheld the secret articles in their possession from publication, lest their appearance should compromise the persons from whom they had been obtained, and borne undeserved obloquy for a long course of years, till their triumphant vindication came from the hands of their enemies.*

* Although the Emperor Alexander professed in public the greatest indignation at the Copenhagen expedition, yet he, in secret, was by no means displeased with its success. "An English officer of literary celebrity (Sir R. Wilson) was employed by Alexander, or those who were supposed to share his most secret councils, to convey to the British minister the Emperor's expression *of the secret satisfaction* which his Imperial Majesty felt at the skill and dexterity which Britain had displayed in anticipating and preventing the purposes of France by her attack upon Copenhagen. Her Ministers were invited to communicate freely with the Czar as with a person who, though obliged to yield to circumstances, was nevertheless as much as ever attached to the cause of European independence."—SCOTT'S *Napoleon*, vi. 24. To the same purpose Lord Londonderry observes:—"On the 7th of November a manifesto was issued, declaring the adhesion of Russia to the principles of the armed neutrality and the Continental System. In consequence, Lord Gower, the English ambassador, left St Petersburg, and Tolstoi set out as Russian envoy for Paris. Nevertheless, Alexander, who had no scruple to play a double part in politics, gave secret assurances to the British Cabinet that he wished to continue in good understanding with it. At the same time, the Czar failed not to take advantage of the clause in the treaty of Tilsit directed against Sweden. He desired the co-operation of King Gustavus against England, and, this being refused, a Russian army prepared to invade Finland. . . . Finland, rent in one campaign from the Swedish monarchy, was annexed

CHAP. III.

1807.

12. Judicious placing of the British army, after Copenhagen, in Sweden.

The use which Lord Castlereagh made of the military force at the entrance of the Baltic, after the taking of Copenhagen, was hardly less important than that capture itself. The Russians having declared war against Sweden, in order to secure, by the acquisition of Finland, their share of the spoils of Tilsit, it became of great importance to prevent the Swedish fleet at Carlscrona, consisting of twelve sail of the line, from falling into their hands, and being rendered a part of the general naval confederacy against Great Britain. The transfer of the troops employed in the Copenhagen expedition to Gottenburg, on the opposite coast of Sweden, accomplished this object. They inspired the chivalrous King of Sweden with confidence to continue firm in the British alliance; and though they could not prevent Finland from being torn from the Swedish Crown and annexed to Russia, they effectually closed the Sound against hostile vessels, and retained the Swedish naval forces in alliance with Great Britain. In this manner was our supremacy in the Baltic effectually secured, and the Russian fleet, of fifteen sail of the line, at Cronstadt, blockaded and shut out from any active part in the projected hostilities by sea against England. Thus, by the direct consequences of the Copenhagen expedition, was not only the whole Danish fleet of twenty sail of the line and fifteen frigates extricated from the enemy's grasp, but the Swedish fleet of twelve was secured in our alliance, and the Russian of fifteen neutralised and kept in check by a comparatively small British squadron in the Baltic. In this way the whole right wing of Napoleon's crusade against this country, consisting of nearly fifty sail of the line, was destroyed or paralysed, and Great Britain secured from the greatest naval danger which had threatened her since the beginning of the war. The tone of Russia was rendered, in secret, more conciliatory by this decisive stroke;

to the dominions of the Autocrat of all the Russias."—*Castlereagh Correspondence*, vi. 208, 209.

and the Czar did not conceal his hidden satisfaction at the Danish fleet being wrested from Napoleon, provided he was secured from molestation in his designs upon Finland.*

13. Lord Castlereagh's plan of an attack on South America.

Following out his strong impression as to the danger which Great Britain would incur from the concentration of all the naval forces of the world against her under the direction of Buonaparte, Lord Castlereagh had, ever since the battle of Jena, in 1806, been revolving in his mind the means of attacking and severing from Old Spain her vast colonies in South America. They were the nursery of the most formidable maritime force with which Great Britain had to contend, and the one which in time past

* "Russia does not show any disposition either to resent or to complain of what we have done at Copenhagen. The Emperor wants to be assured on two grounds—1st, That the principles on which the measure has been undertaken do not apply to Russia; and, 2d, That we are not, by the evacuation of Zealand, about to uncover Sweden to an attack from France, and, by letting a French army into Sweden, expose Russia to be menaced on the side of Finland. The tone of the Russian Cabinet has become much more conciliatory to us since they heard of your operations, partly, perhaps, from alarm for Cronstadt, partly from the natural respect that attaches to a vigorous exertion against that power which they may dread but must hate. The opinion of those best disposed and informed at that Court is, that if we could maintain our position in the Baltic, the counsels of Russia would rapidly improve—at least, that she would not, in that state of things, lend herself to France as a hostile instrument against us."—LORD CASTLEREAGH *to* LORD CATHCART, *September* 22, 1807; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, vi. 183.

"We have accomplished a British object of the first importance in getting the Danish fleet; but the northern powers will reproach us with having purchased a separate advantage at their cost—indeed, such is already the unofficial language of those in confidence in Russia—if the entry of French troops into Zealand, and subsequently into Sweden, should immediately follow our evacuation of that island. . . . We are, above all things, anxious to preserve our character for good faith untainted; but, as far as it can be done consistently with the engagements entered into, we are desirous of converting our present position in Zealand into an instrument for keeping the French out of it. . . . If good faith prevents us from using our position at Copenhagen to bring Denmark to terms, we have only to submit and be grateful for what has been gained."—*Ibid.*, 184, 185.

"Should your Majesty's endeavours to put an end to the war with Denmark fail of success, your Majesty's servants are humbly of opinion that the defence of Sweden ought to be looked to by a corps posted in Sweden, rather than by an attempt to reoccupy and retain the island of Zealand. In order to give the fullest effect to this measure, they humbly beg leave to recommend that a respectable force may be employed in this service, and that Lord Cathcart should be directed, for the present, to remain in the personal command of it."—LORD CASTLEREAGH *to the* KING, *October* 9, 1807; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, vi. 193.

CHAP. III. 1807.

had most seriously endangered the national independence. It was the combined fleets of France and Spain which, in 1784, had ridden triumphant in the British Channel, and held Plymouth in blockade. It was the squadrons of the same powers which, in 1805, had recently menaced in a still more serious manner the national independence, and but for Sir R. Calder's victory, and the disobedience of his orders by Admiral Villeneuve, in steering after it to Cadiz instead of Brest, would have rendered Napoleon the master of the British Channel, and given him the means of effecting a landing on our shores with 150,000 men. The trade which Spain carried on at this time with her transatlantic colonies was immense, and much exceeded that which at that period, and for long after, Great Britain enjoyed with her colonial possessions. It amounted to £15,000,000 of exports and as many imports.[1] It justly occurred to Lord Castlereagh as a most perilous condition of things, that this great trade, necessarily conducted by such an amount of shipping, should be entirely in the hands of a power which had become the willing vassal of France, and had joined her great maritime resources to a state which had already arrayed the whole naval forces of Europe from Cronstadt to Cadiz against this country.

[1] Humboldt, Nouvelle Espagne, iv. 153, 154.

14. His plan for detaching it from the Spanish Crown.

Deeply impressed with these ideas, Lord Castlereagh had long revolved in his mind the means of severing these important colonial possessions from the Spanish Crown. The present time seemed to be eminently favourable for such an enterprise; for the greater part of the fleets of France and Spain had been destroyed at Trafalgar; and the attention of Napoleon having for long been fixed on his Continental operations against Austria, Prussia, and Russia, he had neither enjoyed the leisure nor had the means of re-establishing his marine from the vast conquests he had effected in Northern Europe. There was no time to lose in effecting this object; for, when the power of the French Emperor over the whole Continent, including Russia, was established by the victory of Friedland and treaty

of Tilsit, there would no longer remain a land enemy to combat; and the whole resources of Europe would to a certainty be turned to the great object of the French Emperor's life—the increase of his naval means, and the subjugation of this country, either by the withering effects of a Continental blockade, or by a great naval victory, and subsequent descent with an overwhelming land force on our own shores.

15. His early conferences regarding it with Sir A. Wellesley.

The first thing which Lord Castlereagh did in pursuance of these views, was to consult his intimate friend—on whose sagacity and sound information he had the greatest reliance—Sir Arthur Wellesley, as to the means of carrying it into execution. The earliest trace in his correspondence which is to be found on the subject, is in a communication to Sir Arthur on 2d November 1806, only sixteen days after the battle of Jena, when the Whigs were in office, but when the decisive victory of Napoleon rendered it evident that the Continental war would speedily be at an end, and the naval one against this country be resumed. The plan submitted to Sir Arthur was to attack New Spain, combined with a descent upon Manilla, and thus to acquire a base for general and more extensive operations against the Spanish colony.* Sir Arthur, however, pronounced it impracticable at that season of the year, and practicable only in July. He drew out several memorandums at that time, going in detail into the project, which are an enduring monument of his widespread information and practical sagacity. This project continued to occupy the attention of Government, and General Miranda was consulted on the subject; but these plans proved abortive, and terminated only in disaster, owing to the unfortunate attack on Buenos Ayres in 1807.

* "Upon the whole, I believe that, with a view to the conquest of New Spain, the best mode of disposing of the 4000 men (3000 now at Buenos Ayres and 1000 destined to go to India) would be to send them to the general rendezvous at Jamaica in the proper season. The best season for going to Mexico is from November to May. The rains cease in November and commence in May."—Sir A. Wellesley's *Minute, Nov.* 2, 1806; *Supplementary Despatches*, vi. 38.

CHAP. III.

1807. 16. Lord Castlereagh's plans in regard to South America.

The Whigs having been displaced from the helm in the spring of 1807, and Lord Castlereagh intrusted again with the duties of War Minister, he entered warmly into the plan of detaching South America from Old Spain. Sir Arthur Wellesley had reported that there were in Venezuela, Guiana, and the adjacent territories, 13,000 Spanish troops; so that the attack on them should not be made by less than 10,000 men, including 6000 British infantry and 1400 British cavalry. He added, that these colonies would be the most valuable that Great Britain or any other country ever possessed; but that, as the slave-trade would be abolished, they would be attended with little present advantage.* Being convinced that these colonies would gladly throw off their connection with Old Spain, Lord Castlereagh determined to undertake operations on a great scale, with a view to their entire severance from the mother country. With this view he resolved, in spring 1808, after part of the troops employed in the Copenhagen expedition had returned, to send 8000 men from Cork to join General Spencer's corps, 5000 strong, just come from the Baltic, and lying on the coast of Old Spain. If circumstances did not afford an opening then, the whole force was to proceed to the West Indies, and commence, with a force increased to 15,000 or 16,000 men by reinforcements there and from Halifax, operations against Mexico and the Rio de la Plata. The breaking out of the Spanish war, which occurred at this very time, gave an

June 1, 1808.

* "There is no doubt that the territories under the Captain-General of the Caraccas are the most fertile in the world, and might turn out to be the most valuable colony that Great Britain or any other nation ever possessed; but Great Britain would not derive any additional benefit from them at present as a market for her manufactures and produce, as the number of inhabitants is not very large. There is no very easy communication between that country and other parts of South America; and there is reason to believe that large quantities of British produce are already conveyed into the kingdom of Terra Firma, by the means of neutrals and the contraband trade. The benefit to be derived from the possession of these countries would be gained by the extension and improvement of their cultivation, of which, as the slave-trade will be abolished, there are no hopes. On this ground, therefore, the possession of the colony would be of little positive advantage to Great Britain."—Sir Arthur Wellesley's *Memorandum, Feb.* 15, 1807; *Supplementary Despatches*, vi. 59, 60.

entirely different direction to this force, and it was the expedition thus assembled which landed shortly after in Portugal, and fought the battle of Vimeira. But the papers in the Secretary of State's office prove that the plan of detaching the American colonies from Old Spain had been fully matured by Lord Castlereagh before the Peninsular broke out, and that what was afterwards done by a subsequent Government, in 1823, was only the execution of what he had then projected. The revolutionising of South America has proved so frightful an evil for those beautiful regions and the cause of freedom throughout the world, that no one is now desirous of undertaking the responsibility of occasioning it; and if Mr Canning had lived to this day, it is probable he would have suppressed his boast of "calling a new world into existence." But there can be no doubt that the merit of the project, if merit it be, belongs to Lord Castlereagh, rather than to his brilliant rival, although there is one difference most important with reference to the morality of the proceeding between the circumstances in which they respectively acted —Lord Castlereagh proposed to effect his object during a period of war with Spain by open hostility, and with the King's troops—Mr Canning set about the same design when in perfect amity with the Spanish Government, by means of enlistment of British veterans, connived at by the British authorities, and arms secretly furnished from the royal stores of England.*

* "According to the plan proposed by Lord Castlereagh, provision must be made for the operations, as stated underneath, to be performed by the corps now about to sail from Cork; by the troops under General Spencer, now off Cadiz; and by the troops under General Prevost, now at Halifax. If a detachment of the troops should go to the La Plata, it will be necessary to provide the naval means to assist in the operations to be performed at Monte Video. If the expedition should not go to the La Plata, and the result of the affairs in Spain should be a great undertaking against the Spanish territories in the Gulf, it will be necessary to provide naval means as stated in the 1st, 3d, and 4th articles. If Government should determine to attack New Spain, a force of from 16,000 to 17,000 men ought to be provided, including 2000 cavalry. My opinion is, that it is expedient to commence the operations against the Spanish colonies at Caraccas. *First*, The military difficulties are not so great in these territories as they are in the territories in the Gulf; *secondly*, We have the means of com-

CHAP. III.

1808.

The success of the Copenhagen expedition was prolific of events in the south of Europe, even more important in their ultimate consequences than the paralysis of the right wing of the French naval armament in the north. Enraged at finding the Danish fleet extricated from his grasp, and his whole designs in the Baltic in consequence disconcerted, and aware, from the rapidity and weight of that stroke, of the quality of the antagonist with whom he had to deal, Napoleon resolved to be, if possible, beforehand with the fleets of the Spanish Peninsula. He had already resolved upon this seizure, and bought the consent of Russia to the dethronement of the Peninsular princes by agreeing to the Czar's seizing Finland, Wallachia, and Moldavia; but he dreaded the despatch of a British fleet to the Tagus, and the seizure of the Portuguese fleet, before his land troops, setting out from Bayonne, could reach Lisbon. It was of the utmost moment for him to secure the Portuguese squadron, because Lisbon was the rendezvous assigned for the Russian fleet of twelve sail of the line, under Admiral Siniavin, which was proceeding thither from the Black Sea to co-operate in the general design. Early in November Clarke, War Minister, by Napoleon's desire, wrote a letter to Junot, enjoining him to use the utmost expedition in his march, to press on with ceaseless activity, wholly regardless of the want of provisions, loss of life, or any other difficulties, and whether Portugal had or had not declared war against England, but at all hazards to arrive at Lisbon so as to seize the fleet there before the English squadron could arrive.

17. The success of the Copenhagen expedition hastens Junot's march to Lisbon.

Nov. 3.

But how urgent soever were the orders of the Emperor, and rapid the movements of Junot, Mr Canning and Lord Castlereagh were beforehand with him. The instructions

municating with the people of the country through Miranda, and of explaining at an early period the object of our operations; *thirdly*, We can commence our operations at an earlier period of the year; and, *fourthly*, Success in the Caraccas will remove many of the difficulties attending our operations in other parts, and in case of failure there would not be much difficulty in withdrawing."—*Memorandum*, SIR ARTHUR WELLESLEY *to* LORD CASTLEREAGH, *June* 6, 1808; *Supplementary Despatches*, vi. 73, 74.

sent out to Lord Strangford, the British ambassador at Lisbon, were to urge the Prince Regent's Government to emigrate to Brazil rather than submit to the exactions of the French Government; and the recommendation was attended to with heroic resolution. In the first instance, indeed, under the pressure of immediate and irresistible danger, the Portuguese Government, on the approach of Junot, yielded to all the demands of the French Government, insomuch that the British ambassador, Lord Strangford, was directed to demand his passports and leave the city, which he did amidst the tears of the inhabitants. But the continued advance of Junot, who was now rapidly approaching from Abrantes, the entry of a large body of Spanish troops into the Alentejo, and, above all, the ominous announcement in the *Moniteur* that the "house of Braganza had ceased to reign," soon convinced them that even the most abject submission could not avert the stroke which threatened them, and that their only safety was in flight. Lord Strangford at the same time having relanded, and assured the Prince and his Council that the English Government regarded his former hostile acts as the result only of necessity, and that every facility would be rendered by the English fleet off the mouth of the river to aid their escape, the bolder counsels prevailed, and it was resolved to set sail for the Brazils. The fleet, so anxiously coveted by Napoleon, was little in a state to undertake such a voyage; but by the strenuous exertions of Sir Sidney Smith, who brought his squadron to the mouth of the harbour, aided by the vigour of the British sailors, eight sail of the line, three frigates, five sloops, and a number of smaller vessels, were fitted out in a few days; and on the 27th November the melancholy cortege embarked and set sail for South America. Hardly had they weighed anchor when the French advanced guards came in sight, and, meeting with no opposition, mounted the ramparts just in time to see the last sail vanishing in the offing. With such energy had Junot obeyed the orders of Napoleon to

Nov. 18. The Prince Regent of Portugal and fleet sail for Brazil.

Nov. 5.

CHAP. III. 1808.

hurry on with all possible expedition, that when he entered Lisbon the troops he had amounted only to 1400 foot soldiers and a few horsemen, the poor remains of 25,000 men who had set out from Bayonne six weeks before. There were 14,000 regular troops in Lisbon, but the departure of the Court had banished all thoughts of resistance; and Junot, with his handful of soldiers, more like spectres than men, quietly took possession of his important conquest.[1]

[1] Foy, ii. 380-383; Nevis, 177-179; Moniteur, Nov. 13, 1807; Ann. Reg. 1807, 280-281.

19. Great naval force at the disposal of Napoleon.

By this means a blow was struck at the naval confederacy against Britain, second only to that delivered at Copenhagen in magnitude and importance, and the naval resources of an entire kingdom were extricated from the grasp of France. But even after this second advantage had been gained, the situation of Great Britain, both as to naval and military defence, was very alarming. The resolution of the French Emperor to combine the whole naval force of the Continent against this country, after the disasters he had sustained at sea, and the loss of the Danish and Portuguese fleets, still brought a force to threaten Great Britain, considerably superior at the point of attack to any which could be ranged in defence, dispersed as the British navy of necessity was over the whole world in defence of its numerous colonies. From a return laid before the Cabinet at this time, at Lord Castlereagh's request, by the Privy Seal, it appeared that the European confederacy at the command of Napoleon had 121 sail of the line, of which 88 were ready for sea, exclusive of 23 in ordinary and 40 building. On the other hand, although the British had 206 sail of the line in all, yet there was only 107 in commission or manned, and even the crews of this number were got together with extreme difficulty, and many of the ships were very imperfectly manned. So scattered was this force, that not more than 40 sail of the line could by possibility have been collected in the Channel and the North Sea to combat nearly double that number of enemies, who might with ease be concentrated. Those who are led away by the

common illusion that the naval contest was terminated at Trafalgar, and that Great Britain thenceforth had the undisputed command of the waves, would do well to cast their eyes on the tables quoted below, extracted from Lord Westmoreland's Report to the Cabinet in January 1808, before the Spanish war broke out. The great difference between the number in commission and the total possessed by Great Britain, arose from the severe competition of the merchant service, which, so far from being a nursery for the navy, was its most formidable rival; and the extremely high price of the necessaries of life, which rendered the limited pay of the men in the royal service a most inadequate compensation for the sailor's services.*

* The fleet of the enemy appears to consist of :—

	Ready.	Ordinary.	Building.
French, . .	25	20	27
Spanish, . .	14	...	...
Dutch, . .	4	3	2
Russian, . .	20	...	11
Danish, . .	2	...	...
Turkish, . .	11	...	...
Russia, in Euxine,	12	...	...
	88	23	40

Force of the enemy divided into parts :—

North.	Line.	South.	Line.	Mediterranean.	Line.
Texel and Flushing,	15	Brest, . .	13	Cadiz, . .	14
Building, . .	13	St Omer, . .	1	Carthagena, .	6
Russian, at Cronstadt,	13	Vigo, . .	3	Toulon, . .	5
Do., at Archangel,	6	Rochefort, .	6	Russian, . .	5
Danish, . . .	2	Russian, at Lisbon (Euxine fleet),	10	Turkish, . .	12
In North Sea, .	49	In centre, .	33	Mediterranean, .	42

British naval squadron to oppose :—

North.	Ocean and Channel.	Mediterranean.	Total.
Baltic, . 5	32	27	64

British ships detached in colonies :—

East Indies, Cape, and St Helena, . .	11	
America, ...	3	
Brazil, ...	6	
	—	20
		84

Eighteen sail of the line would require to be added to the British squadron to put them on an equality with the enemy, even after the Danish and Portuguese fleets had been taken from them.—EARL OF WESTMORELAND'S *Cabinet Memorandum, January* 1808; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, viii. 107-109.

CHAP. III. 1808.

It may safely be affirmed, that if the Copenhagen and Portuguese expedition had not deprived the enemy of 30 sail of the line, ready for sea, and admirably manned, Great Britain would at this period have been greatly outnumbered at sea, and the national existence put in the utmost hazard.

20. State of the land forces.

Nor was the condition of the army at the same period more encouraging, for although there were 203,000 men in the regular force, and nearly 80,000 in the militia, yet of this great force no less than 97,000 were on foreign service or returning from it; and of the 106,000 at home, at least 25,000 required to be deducted for Ireland and the Channel Islands, leaving about 80,000 in Great Britain, of whom not more than one-half, or 40,000, could be considered as available for active service abroad.* To this was added the alarming fact, that the troops of the regular army actually round their colours were nearly forty thousand *less* than had been voted by Parliament. This state of things—the natural result of general prosperity and wellbeing among the working-classes, which rendered recruiting for the line and the militia

* British regular forces in November 1807, with their stations:—

FOREIGN SERVICE.	
Gibraltar, Malta, and Sicily,	28,189
East Indies and Cape,	31,533
West Indies and Australia,	22,129
North America,	5,660
Spencer's and Beresford's corps, in Baltic,	9,863
Total on foreign service,	97,374
AT HOME.	
Great Britain,	48,627
Ireland,	27,278
Guernsey,	7,136
Returning from South America,	5,897
Cavalry,	17,000
Total at home,	105,938
„ abroad,	97,374
Total,	203,312

—Lord Westmoreland's *Memorandum, January* 1808; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, viii. 110.

difficult, with the small pay allowed to the soldiers—attracted the serious attention of Lord Castlereagh, upon whom, as Minister at War, the duty of providing a remedy for the difficulty mainly devolved, and he submitted several memorandums to the Cabinet on the subject. They formed the foundation of the military system of Great Britain during the remainder of the war, which furnished such a powerful body of recruits for the service of the Peninsular campaigns; and they are of lasting interest and importance to the country whenever exposed to similar dangers.

21. Lord Castlereagh's system for supplying the army with troops and the defence of the country.

The system of Lord Castlereagh, submitted to and adopted by the Cabinet, consisted of three parts:—1. A sedentary or *local militia*, to be raised by ballot, consisting of at least 300,000 men, in proportion to the population of the different counties in Great Britain. 2. A regular militia of 80,000 men in Great Britain and 40,000 in Ireland, to be raised in the different counties, in proportion to their numbers; the counties being bound to make up the allotted number by the ballot, or pay a fine for every man deficient; or an equal force consisting of second battalions of troops of the line, officered by regular officers, but not liable to be called on to serve beyond their own country. 3. A regular army, at least 220,000 strong, liable to be sent anywhere, to be kept up by ordinary recruiting and volunteering from the militia, and by an establishment for the reception of boys, to be educated for two or three years before they were admitted into the ranks. 4. Of volunteers of the best description, furnishing their own clothes, but not their arms, which were to be supplied by Government; of these it was thought 100,000 might be raised. 5. Of trained men, to be taught the use of the firelock and ordinary drill, but not as yet organised in battalions, but intended to fill up vacancies in the local or regular militia when they should occur; these might be estimated at 400,000 men. In all, 1,380,000 of land and sea forces for the two islands. And to provide for the great

CHAP. III.

1808.

deficiency of the regular army, he proposed that two-fifths of the regular militia for Great Britain and Ireland should be allowed to volunteer into the line, the deficiency to be supplied by the ballot in the several counties. This measure was calculated at 45,000 men; and, having been adopted by the Cabinet, it actually produced 41,786 trained and excellent soldiers for the regular army.[1]*

[1] Lord Castlereagh's Cabinet Minute; Castlereagh Corresp. viii. 112-126.

Merits of this system.

The principles thus laid down by Lord Castlereagh were acted upon by the Government, and formed the basis on which the whole defence of the country during the remainder of the war was founded. The distribution of the armed force thus made, corresponds very nearly to the regular army, landwehr, and landsturm of Prussia and other German states, which proved so efficacious, during the war of 1813 and 1814, in recruiting the allied armies. There was this difference, however, and it was a very great one—that under the British system the regular army was kept up entirely by volunteering recruits, enlisted from the militia or the people, either for life or a long course of years; whereas in Germany it was maintained, as in France, by a compulsory levy of persons between eighteen and twenty-one, in each year, whose period of necessary service extended only to three years, though such as pleased were encouraged to enlist anew of their own accord for a longer period. There can be no doubt that, to produce the one thing needful for the Continental

* The following was the amount of force which Lord Castlereagh calculated under his system could be relied on in an emergency for the defence of the country in the British Islands :—

Navy, marines, and sea fencibles,	150,000
Line,	230,000
Militia, Great Britain and Ireland,	120,000
Volunteers, Great Britain,	100,000
Do., Ireland,	80,000
Local militia, Great Britain,	300,000
Trained men, do.,	400,000
Total,	1,380,000

Besides this, it was proposed that the whole remaining male population, calculated at 2,000,000 more, should be organised for civil service in defence of the State.—LORD CASTLEREAGH'S *Memorandum to the Cabinet; Castlereagh Correspondence*, viii. 113-127.

armies—namely, the concentration of a *large force*, to be permanently stationed at home, or at least in Europe—the Continental system was the most advisable. But it is otherwise in the British empire; and it was not without good reason that, while he retained the ballot for the *home forces*, whether regular or militia, Lord Castlereagh adopted the voluntary system for the regular army. A conscription may do very well in countries where the demand for labour is so limited that wages of ordinary labour are from sixpence to one shilling a-day, and the pay of the soldier implies no diminution of habitual comforts: how will it answer in one where the wages are from two to three shillings, and the common soldier has not half his nominal pay to purchase his own enjoyments? Still more, how is the conscription system, under which the soldiers are changed every three years, to work in an empire where nearly half of the regular army is employed on distant colonial service, where the regiments are seldom removed more frequently than once in ten years; and the great cost of transporting men to the distant possessions, as well as the fearful mortality of young soldiers on their first arrival, renders more frequent changes impossible?

23. Advantages of the ballot for the local militia.

But, for the same reasons, the system Lord Castlereagh adopted of making the local and regular militia be raised by ballot, appears to have been equally wise and advisable. It is the object of such a force to provide a powerful and well-trained armed reserve, ready to be called out when required by the nation's danger, but *not imposing a lasting burden on the finances of the State.* This can only be done by a militia raised by ballot, and exercised for a month or six weeks in the year, but not otherwise interfering with the permanent employment of the men drawn. As such it will never be felt as a hardship, but rather be hailed as a gratification by the working-classes; the exchange of daily and obscure toil for the dress, the occupation, and ease of a soldier's life being

CHAP. III. 1808.

always felt as an enjoyment by civilians. The evil of the ballot for the regular militia was in practice very little felt in the country, as the men were drawn for service during the war, which gave them a lasting occupation; and so large a portion of them was composed of substitutes, who entered the militia for a bounty, and as a step to the line, in which they ultimately landed, that it in effect was little more than a disguised mode of carrying out the voluntary system. For this very reason, however, a regular militia, if raised, as it has always been since the peace, by voluntary enlistment, should always be on condition of the men being embodied for a considerable time, as five or seven years certain. The ballot is excellent for drawing forth the real strength of the country, and is never felt as a burden when it is for a month or six weeks' service in the year only; but if the men enlist of their own accord, it is necessary to give them the certainty of employment for a considerable time. To dismiss them after six or nine months' embodiment only, is to make them *lose one employment without gaining another*, and render unpopular the whole service in which such a risk is undergone. It is to this cause that the awful deficiency in the numbers raised for the regular militia, which in 1859 amounted to 60,000 men, according to the statement of General Peel, the War Minister, is to be ascribed.

24. True principles on the subject for Great Britain.

This matter has now, in consequence of the endangered position of the country since the restoration of the Napoleonic dynasty in France, become one of the very highest importance, and the principles by which it should be regulated are simple, and when once stated must command general assent. The fundamental principle is, that *all classes* should be called on to contribute to the public defence, and that in the way least burdensome and most equitable for each. With this view it is indispensable to divide the armed force into three classes, gradually ascending from the very lowest to the highest grades of society. 1. The local militia, to be raised by ballot in

the several counties, clothed and paid by Government, and governed by officers of its appointment. 2. Volunteers who pay for their own accoutrements, and serve without pay, and in return have the privilege of electing their own officers up to, but not above, the rank of major. 3. The regular militia and army, which are to be kept *permanently embodied*, and differing only in the former being not bound to leave the British Islands except by their own consent. The regular army to be raised by volunteers, either direct, or from the regular or local militia, for which they would both serve as a nursery. Perhaps the more advisable course would be to have second battalions of regular regiments instead of regular militia, not bound to serve out of the country, from which the first battalions might be formed by voluntary enrolment. In that way you would get a superior class of officers. By some such system as this the safety of the country may be absolutely secured, as long as the courage and public spirit of all classes continue. Without it the nation will at all times be exposed on the first breaking out of a war to serious reverses, which, if assailed by a powerful and ambitious foreign enemy, may lead to its entire subjugation.*

* The regular army should be kept up by recruits having "the option of entering for general service, either limited or unlimited in point of time. The former would be thrown principally into the second, the latter into the first battalions. The embarrassment and endless complexity of performing colonial and distant services by troops serving on short and determinable engagements would thus be in a great degree avoided, while the army would at the same time have the benefit of inviting into its ranks those who may be averse to enlist into it without some limitation of time. The second battalions, though chiefly composed of men whose service was limited in point of time, would nevertheless be liable to be employed in any part of the world should occasion require it; and should it be found at any time necessary, during war, to levy suddenly by ballot a large body of men for the regular army, it would not be difficult at the moment to appropriate either garrison or a limited selection of second battalions to receive them, from whence, though originally entering only for home service, they would gradually engage for a more extended description of service.

"The regular militia, liable to service out of their counties, would be constituted and raised precisely as at present, with only the additional facility of procuring men by enlistment from the sedentary militia. A corps of this description seems an indispensable ingredient in the army of a State which must reduce its military force suddenly in time of peace, and call it forth as

CHAP. III.

1808. 25.

Great success of Lord Castlereagh's measures for recruiting the army.

The military measures of Lord Castlereagh were adopted by the Cabinet, and proved eminently successful. One half of the militia establishment were allowed to volunteer into the line, which produced at once 33,000 good soldiers, who were speedily replaced by the ballot in the regular militia. The result was an increase of 23,000 effective men to the army after supplying the usual casualties; and, including artillery, the regulars and regular militia were raised on 1st February 1808 to 310,000 men, of whom 93,000 were on foreign, and 217,000 on home service. This, the Duke of York justly remarked, was a much larger force than "the country at any former period possessed;[1] and the composition of the regular army, particularly of the infantry, has been so much improved by the late drafts from the militia, that the respective battalions average about 700 rank and file

[1] Duke of York's Memorandum, Feb. 1, 1808; Castlereagh Corresp. viii. 162.

suddenly upon the recurrence of war. Without such a force, capable of being rapidly disembodied and reassembled, we should be either too strong an army in peace or too weak in war. To compose the entire army on constant pay of regular troops would be to subject the country to an enormous half-pay list; and to leave such a chasm in our military force to be filled up on the breaking out of a war, before we could arrive at our standard strength, as to doom the country for the three or four first campaigns either to weakness at home or inactivity abroad."

The volunteers should be very much reduced in number when the local militia is called out; but they may always be kept up at 100,000 at very trifling expense.

The local militia should not be of "less than 200,000 for England, with a corresponding proportion for Scotland. It is perhaps too hazardous either to train or to arm the people of Ireland indiscriminately, where the men so brought together are not permanently subjected to the constraint of military discipline. Perhaps an extension and regenerating of the volunteer corps, under an obligation to pass a certain number of days in each year on permament duty, might for the present be more applicable to the situation of the country. . . . The sedentary militia in Great Britain to be chosen by ballot for a service of three years, out of the trained men; to be regimented and officered as the militia now is; to be trained in war as the regular militia now is in time of peace; and to be liable to service out of their counties only in case of invasion or rebellion."—LORD CASTLEREAGH'S *Memorandum to the Cabinet, December* 1807; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, viii. 122-124. Such were Lord Castlereagh's principles on this all-important subject, and they were in themselves so reasonable and suitable to the circumstances of the country, that they are very nearly the same as those now (1860) in operation. The country has never since been endangered but by their abandonment during the periods of mental hallucination which never fail to seize upon its inhabitants after any considerable period of unbroken peace.

each. The force at home, including the new militia levies, will exceed by nearly 25,000 men the greatest amount of force which has hitherto been stationed in Great Britain and Ireland for its home defence."

26. Breaking out of the Spanish war.

It was fortunate for Great Britain, and for the cause of European freedom, that Lord Castlereagh had at this juncture taken these decisive measures to augment the strength of the regular army; for the period was approaching when it was to be tried to the uttermost, and when the cause of general independence was to rest on its sabres and bayonets. So far from being deterred by the bad success of his attempt to gain possession of the Portuguese fleet from pursuing further his ambitious designs on the Peninsula, Napoleon was only stimulated thereby to urge them on with greater activity, and thus secure himself from being anticipated, as he had been at Copenhagen and Lisbon, in his designs against the Spanish monarchy. Troops were marched through Germany and France with the utmost expedition towards the Pyrenees; the advanced corps at Bayonne were pushed forward without a moment's delay towards Madrid; and the imperious demand for the delivery of the Prince of Asturias was followed by the insurrection in the Spanish capital of May 2, which was May 2.
soon extinguished in blood, and roused the whole nation by a unanimous and instinctive impulse to arms. Deprived of their regular army by the treacherous forethought of the French Emperor, who had stationed it in Jutland intending to make it instrumental in seizing the Danish fleet—without a government, and with their chief fortresses in the hands of the enemy—the Spanish people unanimously rose against their oppressors, elected juntas in the different provinces, and separately began a mortal war with the invaders. Success, as might have been expected under such circumstances, was various, and victory was often largely intermingled with disaster; but upon the whole the insurgents maintained their ground; and at

CHAP. III. 1808.

length the defeat and surrender of Dupont with 20,000 men, in the defiles of the Sierra Morena, acted as a thunderbolt which first broke the spell which had hitherto bound the world, and speedily sent the French armies in disgrace behind the Ebro.

27. Lord Castlereagh's disposition of the land force and transports of Great Britain for active operations.

Foreseeing the approach of a crisis of this description, Lord Castlereagh had so disposed the military force of Great Britain, with the transports necessary for their conveyance, as to be able to take immediate advantage of it. The system adopted by his predecessors of breaking up the whole transport service in order to save £4000 a-month, and thereby chaining the British forces, at the most critical time, when they might have decided the contest, to their own shores, was given up and succeeded by one which rendered them instantly available. Not only had he the whole forces of Great Britain and Ireland deemed disposable quartered in the southern counties of the two islands, within a short distance of the ports of embarkation, but a fleet of transports was there collected, available at a moment's notice, capable of conveying them at once to whatever point might be selected for attack. Add to this that a fleet of transports was lying at Gottenburg capable of bringing away the British troops under General Moore, left at Gottenburg, and which was afterwards of essential service in transporting the Spanish corps under the Marquis de Romana, from their place of exile in Jutland, to the theatre of more honourable warfare in the north of Spain. Thus, at length, the British forces, brought up to an unprecedented state of strength and efficiency, were disposed in the situation which Lord Castlereagh had so long desired, and which more than tripled their real strength, for they were capable of being suddenly transported to an unforeseen point of attack, and inspiring widespread dread in the enemy by the uncertainty where the blow was likely to fall.[1]

[1] Castlereagh Corresp. viii. 174-177.

The knowledge of Napoleon's intention to unite the

whole naval forces of the Continent in a league against Great Britain, and of the thorough organisation for effecting this object which the secret articles of the treaty of Tilsit had put at his disposal, suggested to Lord Castlereagh, in the first instance, an attack on Boulogne, now in a great measure stripped of its defenders, who were on the road to the Pyrenees. To effect at this propitious moment the destruction, at little risk, of the flotilla which had so seriously menaced the existence of Great Britain, was certainly a most important object; and he went so far as to write to the Duke of York to make preparations for the expedition, in which 20,000 men, drawn from England and Cork, embracing the whole Guards excepting one battalion, were to be engaged.* Had the war taken a different turn, and the energy of Castlereagh, aided by the genius of Wellington, not fixed its theatre in subsequent years in the Peninsula, it might have been matter for serious regret that this design was not carried into execution. But the feelings of the nation, now roused to the highest pitch of enthusiasm by the glorious efforts of the Spanish patriots, rendered any operation distasteful which was not calculated immediately to assist them.

28. His projected operation against Boulogne. July 23.

It became evident, too, from the progress of events, that even with a view to the insular security of Britain and breaking up the great naval confederacy formed by Napoleon against it, more might be done by vigorous assistance tendered to the Peninsular powers than even by the total destruction of the Boulogne flotilla. For

29. Which is abandoned, and an expedition to Portugal is resolved on.

* "My Dear Lord,—I take the earliest opportunity to acknowledge the receipt of your Lordship's two letters of yesterday by a special messenger—the first, marked 'most secret,' desiring that the corps under orders at Cork may be augmented to 5000 rank and file, and suggesting Sir David Baird being appointed to the command of them: the second, marked 'most secret and confidential,' proposing that a force between 12,000 and 15,000 men should be, without delay, held in readiness to embark, with a view to an operation against Boulogne; of which force you mention the whole of the Guards, except one battalion to be left in London, composing a part."—Duke of York *to* Lord Castlereagh, *July* 25, 1808; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, viii. 177.

CHAP. III. 1808.

the Russian fleet from the Euxine, in pursuance of the agreed-on plan of operations, had arrived in the Tagus, where it was blockaded by the British squadron: five sail of the line belonging to France, the poor remains of the fleet which had combated at Trafalgar, were in Cadiz, also blockaded; and by ranging Spain on the side of Great Britain, twenty-three sail of the line, in good condition, would be withdrawn from the French alliance and added to the naval forces of Great Britain. Thus, by supporting the Peninsular war, the whole left wing of the fleet destined to effect our subjugation would be paralysed as completely as the right wing had been by the Copenhagen expedition, and the naval forces of the enemy reduced to those of France and Holland, with which those of England were well able to cope. Influenced by these considerations, which were in themselves obviously well-founded, Lord Castlereagh, after consulting with the Duke of York, who furnished a most able memorandum on the subject to the Cabinet, resolved on sending a powerful force to the Peninsula, and directing it in one body against Lisbon, where Junot lay with his corps; and there was reason to hope he might either be cut off or compelled to enter into a capitulation for the surrender of the capital, the Russian fleet, and the entire evacuation of the country.*

* This memorandum of the Duke of York, which was a very able paper, was as follows, and bears the strongest evidence to the vigour and success with which Lord Castlereagh had, since his accession to the War Office, augmented the military resources of the country:—"*August* 1, 1808.—It may, I think, be stated without fear of dispute, that the army of this country is at the present moment larger, more efficient, and more disposable than at any former period of our history. Great and unusual exertions have been made to procure the men; and the circumstances of the war have allowed a sufficient time to discipline and form them; but these extraordinary measures are not often in our power, and cannot in any case be frequently resorted to. It becomes, therefore, a consideration of the utmost importance in what manner this force can be most effectually employed to the advantage and honour of the country and the King in support and furtherance of the great cause in which we are engaged.

"The weakness and apathy of all the powers on the Continent have rendered them incapable of opposing, or subservient to the views of, France; and it is this country alone from which any effectual opposition can be made

The die was now cast, and it was resolved by the Cabinet to go into the opinion of Lord Castlereagh and the Duke of York, and assist the war in the Peninsula by a large British force acting in one mass under the direction of its own generals, and in distant co-operation only with the Spanish forces. Portugal was the country which naturally presented itself as the fit theatre for the proposed descent,

30. Portugal is selected as the battle-field by Lord Castlereagh.

against the inordinate ambition of the French ruler, and upon which the rest of Europe can alone depend for support and assistance in the restoration of civil government and the ancient order of things. . . . Since the unfortunate campaign of 1806, and the total subversion of the Prussian empire and of the Germanic body, resources no longer exist in that quarter for providing such a body of troops as could cope with France, or sufficient time to enable the people of those countries, however zealously and loyally inclined, or however great their hatred of the yoke under which they are groaning, to come forward and unite in defence or support of the common cause.

"The situation of Spain forms a new epoch. The recent events in that country evince a determination on the part of the people to resist the usurpation of the enemy to the last extremity, and to maintain at all risks the established laws and religion of their empire. The Spaniards are the first people that have risen in one mass, and that have enthusiastically united in support of their own cause against the common enemy; they are the first nation upon the Continent that appear to have made their country's cause individually their own; and, actuated as they are by one national spirit and determined animosity against their invaders, there is no doubt really fair ground for hope of their success. But though we cannot but admire, we must not be misled by the enthusiasm of these brave men, or expect them to perform impossibilities. And it becomes our duty, therefore, in our cordial endeavours to assist them to the utmost, to examine into the actual situation of the country where this convulsion took place, and to be guided in our plans of operation, which we may, on cool and mature reflection, judge most competent to insure ultimate success, rather than risk misfortune by the hasty adoption of partial measures, which, either from eagerness or jealousy, may be strongly urged upon our attention.

"At the commencement of the insurrection, Spain was deprived of the whole force of the kingdom. The troops that remained were the Guards at Madrid, the garrisons in the different fortresses upon a low establishment, and the depot battalions belonging to the regiments on service in the north of Europe and in the colonies. . . . The troops of the enemy in detached bodies occupied most of the principal fortresses and posts of the empire, and measures were taken to augment this force to a more considerable extent; and the only advantage which Spain still possessed was, that her population, not having suffered by the disasters common to the rest of the Continent, remained still entire. In this state of things, the utmost that could be reasonably expected from the most enthusiastic efforts of the people was, that by dint of numbers some detached and scattered bodies of the enemy should be destroyed, and that by this means some of the provinces might be so cleared as to admit of a rapid formation of the peasantry and an incorporation of them with the weak battalions of the line. This appears to have been the real situation of the country at the period of our latest advices, and the formation of the levies to

CHAP. III. 1808.

because it was occupied by a French corps in a manner cut off from immediate assistance from France; because it presented an admirable base for future operations, resting on the sea, and eminently capable of defence; because the British forces would there be supreme and unfettered by the jealousies, or beyond the reach of the follies, of the Spanish provincial juntas; and because success against the capital would at once give us the command of the Russian fleet lying in the Tagus, and immediately raise the whole country in insurrection against the invaders. It was determined, agreeably to Lord Castlereagh's suggestions,

have been so ably and actively entered upon as, in the province of Andalusia alone, to have held in check a considerable division of the enemy supposed to exceed 10,000 men. To these successes, as well as to their national jealousy against this country, may be attributed their present disinclination to receive any other support from us than ammunition, arms, and money, and the partial co-operation of small detached corps. The most sanguine, however, can scarcely yet venture to flatter himself, from any advantages already obtained by the patriots, that their final success can be considered as certain. . . .

"We must therefore look to the possibility of a reverse, and of the patriots being under the necessity of calling upon us for more substantial aid. But, should we at this period unfortunately have given way to their prior wishes of dividing and frittering away our force, we should no longer have it in our power to furnish that effectual support which their necessities would then require, which could alone, in my opinion, bring the contest to a favourable termination. We should be prepared, therefore, to direct the whole force we are now capable of sending to some one given point, persuaded that the calls of the Spaniards will very shortly be loud and urgent, and that by acting in one solid body we shall not only use our own force to the greatest advantage, but shall afford them one firm point of *appui* to which the whole kingdom may safely look, and upon which they should then be called upon to form as the sole point of direction for the permanent re-establishment of their empire. This position being admitted—and it is the only true one that suggests itself to my mind—I feel it an indispensable duty to the army and to the country to give my strongest opinion against any partial employment or distribution of our force into detached commands, which will not only subject these auxiliary divisions to be commanded by, and to follow the fortunes of, the several provincial generals, to whose corps they may be attached; but, as they would be thus acting in defiance of every military principle against a skilful and powerful enemy, I should greatly fear that no exertions on our part could prevent the contest ending in misfortune and defeat. — FREDERICK." — *Castlereagh Correspondence*, viii. 179-183. This is a very remarkable letter, foreshadowing the whole course of the Peninsular struggle, and clearly developing the principle by which Wellington at length brought it to a successful termination; and the more so, when it is recollected it was written by the Duke of York on August 1, 1808, before either the defeat of Dupont or the battle of Vimeira, and when the entire nation was reeling in delirious transports at the popular character and enthusiastic feelings excited by the Spanish insurrection.

to make the force sent, in the very outset, 40,000 men; and fortunately the wise precaution taken by him of having a large fleet of transports constantly at command, in the service of Government, rendered it possible to send off even this large force at the shortest notice, and to any quarter which might be deemed advisable. With such success had Lord Castlereagh's measures for strengthening and concentrating the army been attended, that there were 66,000 men capable of being thrown at once on any part of the Peninsula—a British force double of that which Marlborough led to victory.*

31. Choice of a Commander-in-chief.

The *materiel* of a great army, therefore, was ready, and transports prepared to carry it at once to any point which might be selected. But a difficulty, at all times serious, and more especially so in the British army at that time, arose, Who was to be the Commander-in-chief? The great number of respectable veteran generals whose experience in war was not equal to their years, in consequence of the contest having hitherto been chiefly at sea, rendered the selection a matter of equal delicacy and difficulty. Lord Castlereagh, whose principle invariably was to select the ablest man for any important service, had become, both from his situation as head of the Board of Control, and from his conduct in the Copenhagen expedition, fully aware of the great qualities of Sir Arthur Wellesley; and he had, in consequence, been in direct com-

* FORCES.	Infantry, Officers and Men.	Artillery, and Drivers.	Cavalry, Officers and Men.	Total Officers and Men.	Horses.	Transports.	Tons.
Serving in Portugal, . .	34,397	2748	1805	38,950	2917	393	99,385
Under orders to embark, .	12,550	1027	3100	16,677	4238	207	49,330
	46,947	3775	4905	55,627	7155	600	148,715
Disposable in Mediterranean, ...	10,000	800	258	11,058	258	36	18,615
Ditto at Halifax, . . .	4,000	400	...	4,400	...	23	7,385
Total British equipped, .	60,947	4975	5163	71,085	7413	659	174,715
Spaniards from Baltic, . .	10,000	...	...	10,000	...	41	11,841
	70,947	4975	5163	81,085	7413	700	186,556

—Duke of York's *Minute, Sept.* 15, 1808; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, viii. 185.

CHAP. III.

1808.

munication with him for some time past, as already mentioned, as to the best means of counteracting the views of Napoleon against Spanish South America. He had destined him for the command of any expedition employed on that service. He accordingly at once suggested him for the command; and in order to hold it, he had, on the 28th April preceding, been promoted to the rank of Lieutenant-General. But there were many other lieutenant-generals and full generals of much longer standing in the service; and the authorities in the Horse Guards, wedded to the system of seniority, and pressed by political or family interest at home, objected to so young an officer being put at the head of the whole army, as it would prevent so many other officers of merit, but older standing, from serving in its ranks. It could not be denied that there was much force in the last objection, especially as an officer of the highest merit, Sir John Moore, stood in that situation; and the force which he commanded in Sweden was intended to join in the Peninsular operations. The utmost, accordingly, which Lord Castlereagh could effect was to obtain for Sir Arthur the command of the expedition which was to sail from Cork, and formed the vanguard of the whole, until he was superseded by senior officers arriving with the second and third divisions coming from Great Britain and Sweden. He got the command, accordingly, of the first detachment, consisting of thirteen regiments, for the most part embarked from Cork, on the 14th June; but he was only fourth in command of the whole. Sir Hew Dalrymple, Sir Harry Burrard, and Sir John Moore, who also had command, were his superior officers. Some of his friends having expressed to Sir Arthur surprise that he who had commanded great armies in India, received the thanks of Parliament, and been second in command in Zealand, should now accept service in so subordinate a situation, he made the memorable reply, "I was *nimukwallah*, as we say in the East, I have ate of the King's salt,[1] and therefore I consider it my duty to serve with zeal and

June 14.

[1] Lord Castlereagh to Sir H. Dalrymple, July 15, 1808; Gurw. iv. 18.

promptitude when or wherever the King, or his Government, may think it proper to employ me."*

Although Lord Castlereagh failed in obtaining for Sir Arthur the chief command, yet he wrote a confidential letter to Sir H. Dalrymple, strongly recommending him for any service or situation which required particular vigour, judgment, and ability.† But Sir Arthur had gained great success, and commenced his immortal career, before he was superseded in the command by that officer. The expedition which he commanded, mustering not quite 10,000 sabres and bayonets, set sail from Cork on the 12th July, and disembarked in Mondego Bay on the 31st. The division under General Spencer, from Cadiz, came up, 5000 strong, on the 5th, and the united force, consisting of 13,000 effective men, set out towards Lisbon. On the 19th August they were reinforced by Anstruther's brigade, and on the 20th by Ackland's, which augmented his force to 16,000 men, with 18 guns, and 180 horse; and Junot, having concentrated 14,000 men, including 1200 horse, and 26 guns, advanced to the encounter.‡ The advanced guard

§ 32. Landing of the expedition, and battle of Vimeira.

July 12.

July 31.

* "I have received your private letter of the 21st of July, for which I am much obliged to you. I shall be the junior of the Lieutenant-Generals; however, I am ready to serve the Government wherever, and as they please."—Sir Arthur Wellesley *to* Lord Castlereagh, *August* 8, 1808; Gurwood, iv. 59.

† "Permit me to recommend to your particular confidence Lieutenant-General Sir Arthur Wellesley. His high reputation in the service as an officer would in itself dispose you, I am persuaded, to select him for any service that required great prudence and temper, combined with much military experience. The degree, however, to which he has been for a length of time past in the closest habits of communication with his Majesty's Ministers with respect to the affairs of Spain, having been destined to command any operation that circumstances might render necessary for counteracting the views of France against the Spanish dominions in South America, will, I am sure, point him out to you as an officer of whom it is desirable for you, on all accounts, to make the most prominent use which the rules of the service will permit."—Lord Castlereagh *to* Sir Hew Dalrymple, *July* 15, 1808; Gurwood, iv. 18.

‡ In this march the same difficulties which were afterwards so severely experienced in the Crimea were at once felt. Sir Arthur wrote to Lord Castlereagh on the 8th August—"I have had the greatest difficulty in organising my commissariat for the march, and that department is very incompetent, notwithstanding the arrangements which I made with Huskisson upon

CHAP. III.

1808. Aug. 21.

of the two armies met at Rolica on the 17th, and at Vimeira on the 21st, on both of which occasions the French, after a fierce struggle, were overthrown, and on the last, 13 guns and 400 prisoners were taken. As soon as this success was achieved, Sir Arthur proposed to move, the same evening, with the part of his army which had been least engaged, 9000 strong, direct on *Torres Vedras*, destined to celebrity in after days, by which means he would have cut off Junot's retreat to Lisbon, and driven him to a disastrous and eccentric retreat to Abrantes or Badajoz, in the course of which half, if not the whole of his army would have perished. But Sir H. Burrard, who had come up and assumed the command after the battle, deemed this movement too hazardous, and the troops were ordered to bivouac on the field of battle. The consequence was, that Junot, by a night march, regained the Lisbon road, and fell back to that capital without further molestation, but weakened by 3000 men, and half his artillery, in the two disastrous battles he had sustained.[1]*

[1] Sir A. Wellesley to Lord Castlereagh, Gurw. iv. 93-98.

This opportunity having been lost by the undue pru-

the subject. This department deserves your serious attention. The existence of the army depends upon it; and yet the people who manage it are incapable of managing anything out of a counting-house. I shall be obliged to leave Spencer's guns behind for want of means of moving them; and I should have been obliged to leave my own if it were not for the horses of the Irish Commissariat. Let nobody ever prevail upon you to send a corps to any part of Europe without horses to draw their guns. It is not true that horses lose their condition at sea."—SIR ARTHUR WELLESLEY *to* LORD CASTLEREAGH; *Lavaos, August* 8, 1808; GURWOOD, iv. 59.

* "I recollect that on the 21st August Sir A. Wellesley urged Sir H. Burrard to advance, giving, as a reason, that his right was some miles nearer to Torres Vedras than the enemy; that he had four brigades that had not been engaged; and that Torres Vedras was the pass by which the enemy must retire to Lisbon; and that, in his opinion, by that movement no part of the French army would reach Lisbon."—LORD BURGHERSH'S *Evidence before Committee of Inquiry;* GURWOOD, iv. 214.

"About the close of the action, when it was evident that the enemy must be everywhere repulsed, Sir Arthur came up to me and proposed to advance: I understood he meant the movement to be from our right, and towards Torres Vedras. . . . I answered that I saw no reason for altering my former resolution of not advancing."—SIR HARRY BURRARD'S *Evidence before Court of Inquiry;* GURWOOD, iv. 205.

dence of the second in command, nothing remained but to accede to the proposal for an armistice, to be followed by the evacuation of the country, which was shortly after made by Marshal Junot. It was concluded accordingly on the 30th August, and immediately after followed by the entire evacuation of the country by the French troops. This convention, which acquired an unenviable celebrity under the name of the "Convention of Cintra," excited the most violent discontent in Great Britain, where the previous victory, and the surrender of Dupont in the defiles of the Sierra Morena to Castanos, had excited unbounded enthusiasm and the most extravagant expectations. A Court of Inquiry was in consequence appointed to sit on the subject. Sir Arthur, who found his situation uncomfortable under generals who were obviously not equal to the crisis, was not sorry when he was summoned home to give evidence before the Court; and, by doing so, he avoided the disasters of the Corunna retreat. From the very first, however, he entirely approved, except in some subordinate details regarding the French plunder, of the Convention, and his reasons, which were afterwards stated at length before the Court of Inquiry, were early given in a long letter to Lord Castlereagh, which presented them with irresistible force.* The view he took was obviously well

33. Convention of Cintra, which, in the circumstances, was expedient.

* "I think it but just to inform your Lordship that I concurred with the Commander of the Forces in thinking it expedient, on the 22d of August, that the French army in Portugal should be allowed to evacuate that kingdom with their arms and baggage, and that every facility for this purpose should be afforded to them.

"I deemed this to be expedient in the relative state of the two armies on the evening of the 22d, considering that the French army had then resumed a formidable position between us and Lisbon; that they had the means of retiring from that position to others in front of that city, and, finally, of crossing the Tagus into Alentejo, with a view to the occupation in strength of the forts of Elvas, La Lippe, and, eventually, Almeida. As Lieutenant-General Sir John Moore's corps had been diverted from the occupation of the position at Santarem, which had been proposed for them, there were no means to prevent, and no increase of numbers could have prevented, the French army from effecting these objects.

"The British army, after waiting for and receiving its reinforcements,

CHAP. III. 1808.

founded. By the Convention the British got immediate possession of the forts, arsenals, and dockyards of Lisbon, with all the fortresses in the kingdom occupied by the French troops; twelve Russian sail of the line fell into our hands; the troops who capitulated were to be transported to Rochefort, a long way from the Peninsular field of action; the immense moral advantage was gained of exhibiting a French Marshal and corps entering into a capitulation, and an entire kingdom liberated from their arms by a single victory. Add to this, that the British army was, by the Convention, immediately put in possession of the capital, containing ample supplies, of which it stood much in need, and a strong fortified position and harbour, forming the best possible

would thus have been precluded from the use of the Tagus for some time longer; and, as it depended for its supplies of provisions and ammunition upon its communication with the fleet, which, in the end of August, would have become most precarious by the coast, it would have been involved in difficulties for the want of necessaries, which would have been aggravated by the increase of its numbers. To these circumstances, which affected the immediate situation of the army and its existence in Portugal, there were other considerations to be added respecting its future operations. I considered it most important that the British army in Portugal should be at liberty, at an early period, to march into Spain. Not only no arrangements for the march into Spain could be made till the French had evacuated Elvas and Almeida, and we should have possession of the Tagus and the Douro, but the army must have attacked and taken these places by regular sieges, before his Majesty could have restored the government of his ally, or could have moved his troops to the assistance of the Spaniards. I need not point out to your Lordship the difficulties of these operations, their increase in the season in which they would have been undertaken, or the time which they would have lasted. These circumstances, affecting the situation, the objects, and the future operations of the army, were to be attributed to the fact that the enemy occupied, in a military point of view, the whole of Portugal, having every stronghold in their hands; that their situation on the evening of the 22d of August enabled them still to avail themselves of these possessions, and to strengthen them as they might think proper; and I conceived that an army, whose retreat was open, and which possessed such advantages, had a fair claim to be allowed to have the facility of withdrawing from the country."—SIR ARTHUR WELLESLEY *to* LORD CASTLEREAGH, *London, October* 6, 1808; GURWOOD, iv. 148, 149. These considerations are so important and obviously well founded, that they render it doubtful whether the cause of the Peninsula would have been as much benefited even by the successful march of Sir Arthur Wellesley to Torres Vedras, and consequent cutting off of Junot from the capital, and forcing him back to Almeida or Elvas, as it was by the subsequent capitulation which at once put the whole resources of Portugal at his disposal, and rendered it the basis of all his future operations.

basis for future operations. In this opinion Lord Castlereagh entirely concurred, though, in order to satisfy the public mind, and gain an opportunity of making the grounds of it generally known, he acquiesced in the propriety of having a Court of Inquiry.

34. Advance of Sir John Moore into Spain.

This sitting of the Court of Inquiry in London, in which they all, of course, required to be examined at length, of necessity excluded all the three generals who had in such rapid succession been intrusted with the command of the army in Portugal from any share in the first operations in Spain, which were intrusted by Lord Castlereagh to Sir John Moore. Sir Arthur, in private correspondence with him, chafed at the delay which took place in commencing the forward movement. On the 1st September he said, that if he were Commander-in-chief in Sir Hew Dalrymple's place, he would have 20,000 men in Madrid in a month; and about the same time he wrote to Lord Castlereagh that things were not prospering, and that he felt an earnest desire to quit the army, though he would do whatever the Government wished.* The generals in command in Portugal used the utmost efforts to get the preparations for the march into Spain completed as rapidly as possible; but so miserably scanty were the means of transport, that a very long time elapsed before they could be put in motion. At length, however, they set out, converging towards the point of junction on the plains of Leon from three quar- Dec.

* "The army has halted in its position, with the only difference that we have a corps in Torres Vedras, instead of three miles from that town. In short, in ten days after the action of the 21st, we are not farther advanced, or indeed, as I believe, so far advanced as we should and ought to have been on the night of the 21st. I assure you, my dear Lord, matters are not prospering here; and I feel an earnest desire to quit the army. I have been too successful with this army ever to serve with it in a subordinate situation with satisfaction to the person who shall command it, and, of course, not to myself. However, I shall do whatever the Government may wish."—SIR ARTHUR WELLESLEY *to* LORD CASTLEREAGH, *August* 30, 1808; GURWOOD, iv. 118.

"I do not know what Sir Hew Dalrymple proposes to do, or is instructed to do; but if I were in his situation, I would have 20,000 men at Madrid in less than a month from this time."—SIR ARTHUR WELLESLEY *to the* HONOURABLE CHARLES STEWART, *September* 1, 1808; GURWOOD, iv. 121.

CHAP. III. 1808.

ters: Sir John Moore himself, with the infantry and cavalry, coming up from Abrantes and Salamanca; Sir John Hope, with the artillery, from Madrid, which he had reached by the circuitous route of Badajoz, rendered necessary to avoid the direct road by Ciudad Rodrigo, which had become almost impassable for carriages; and Sir David Baird, with a fresh expedition who had landed at Corunna, from Ireland. They were concentrated on the 20th December at Mayorga in Leon, and Sir John Moore, who had less than 25,000 effective British troops under his command, advanced against Marshal Soult, who lay in unsuspecting security with 16,000 in the valley of the Carrion.[1]

[1] Lond. i. 217-233; Moore's Campaign in Spain, 187-194.

35. Great effects of Sir J. Moore's advance against Soult.

It belongs to another part of our biography to give some military details of the short but memorable campaign which followed, in which the Honourable Colonel Charles Stewart, Lord Castlereagh's brother, bore a distinguished part. Suffice it to say, that the advance of Sir John Moore, though not expressly enjoined by Lord Castlereagh, was fully approved by him, and coincided exactly with the military policy, at once bold and prudent, which he always adopted. The advantages of the step were obvious. It verified the saying of Napoleon six months before, that a victory by the Allies on the plains of Leon would paralyse every French army in the Peninsula. It at once stopped the advance in La Mancha, Valencia, and Aragon, and caused Napoleon himself, with his Guards and Cuirassiers, and 50,000 chosen troops, to remeasure his steps in the depth of winter over the Guadarama snows. Without doubt the English army was exposed to hazard, and in the end sustained serious losses, by this gallant movement. But its effects were immense; and, not less than Wellington's subsequent stand at Torres Vedras, it was a turning-point in the Peninsular war. It *prolonged* the contest which the success over Massena *determined*. But for it the struggle would have been over, Andalusia overrun, and Portugal con-

quered, before three months were over. And this was effected by Moore with 25,000 men against the French Emperor, who had 250,000 men effective and present with the eagles in the Peninsula.* Such was the effect of the skilful direction of a small force to the vital point of the enemy's communications, and of the skilful use made by Castlereagh of the immense advantage which an insular power, itself secure from attack, possesses in being able at pleasure to direct its forces to that quarter.

36. Lord Castlereagh disapproves of the abandonment of Spain by the British army.

But although cordially approving the advance to the Carrion, and acquiescing in the necessity of the subsequent retreat into the fastnesses of Galicia, when Napoleon directed 70,000 men against the British force, not a third part of the amount, Lord Castlereagh was far from sharing the desponding views of Moore as to the hopelessness of any further struggle in the Peninsula.† On the contrary, he had adopted, and was prepared resolutely to act on, the often expressed opinion of Sir Arthur Wellesley,

* Viz., Eight corps, ... 319,690
Present under arms, ... 247,834
Horses, ... 56,567
Detached, ... 32,536
In hospital, ... 37,419
—*Imperial Muster Rolls, in* NAPIER, i., *Appendix* 28.

† "Every effort," said Sir John Moore, in writing to Lord Castlereagh, "shall be exerted on my part, and that of the officers under me, to unite the army; but your Lordship must be prepared to hear that we have failed, for, situated as we are, success cannot be commanded by any efforts we can make if the enemy are prepared to oppose us. If the French succeed in Spain, *it will be in vain to attempt to resist them in Portugal.* The Portuguese are without a military force, and from the experience of their conduct under Sir Arthur Wellesley, no dependence is to be placed on any aid that they can give. The British must, in that event, I conceive, immediately take steps to evacuate the country. Lisbon is the only port, and therefore the only place whence the army can embark with its stores. Elvas and Almeida are the only fortresses on the frontiers. The first is, I am told, a respectable work. Almeida is defective, and could not hold out beyond ten days against a regular attack. I have ordered a depôt of provisions, for a short consumption, to be formed there, in case this army should be obliged to fall back; perhaps the same should be done at Elvas. In this case we might retard the progress of the enemy while the stores are embarking, and arrangements were made for taking off the army. Beyond this the defence of Lisbon or Portugal should not be thought of."—SIR JOHN MOORE *to* LORD CASTLEREAGH, *November* 24 and 30, 1808; *MS. Castlereagh Papers*, and CHAMBERS'S *Scottish Biography*, iv. 32, 33, where the letters are quoted.

CHAP. III. 1808.

that "Portugal might be *successfully defended against any force the enemy could bring against it*, and that the maintenance of that position by the British would be the *greatest support to the common cause in Spain.*"[1] Acting on this principle, Lord Castlereagh had prepared the most powerful succours to enable the British to maintain their ground in Galicia or Portugal, or both, even after the disastrous retreat to Corunna had reduced the army under Moore to two-thirds of its former amount. Thirteen thousand men were embarked or in course of embarkation when the despatches from Sir J. Moore and Sir D. Baird caused the embarkation to be stopped, and the transports *sent out empty* to bring away the troops. Mr Canning, who had fully gone into Lord Castlereagh's bold views on this subject, afterwards said, in his place as Foreign Minister in Parliament, that the sending out these empty transports instead of the reinforcements, cost him a greater pang than he had ever experienced in the whole course of his political life.*

[1] Sir A. Wellesley to Lord Castlereagh, April 2, 1810; Gurwood, vi. 6.

Sir John Moore and Sir David Baird, as might well be supposed, were most anxious for definite instructions how to dispose of an army when it had become evident, from the magnitude of the French force, consisting in all of 60,000 men, directed against it, that it was impossible to keep their footing longer in the north of Spain.† Un-

* "The troops which had been embarked on board the transports in England," said Mr Secretary Canning, "were disembarked in consequence of a distinct requisition that he wanted a certain number of transports, and the transports from which these troops had been disembarked were sent out pursuant to that requisition. It was an afflicting circumstance that it had become necessary to retard these troops, and send out their transports for the purpose of bringing away the British army, which had been fitted out for the purposes of reinforcement and assault. But at this distance from the scene of action, Ministers could not venture to refuse to send out those transports. The sending them out empty cost Government a severe pang. No resolution ever gave me more pain. Every dictate of the head, every feeling of the heart, was tortured by it. But Ministers had no alternative, and they were compelled to submit to the hard necessity. The troops so embarked, and in course of embarkation, were 13,000 men."—*Parliamentary Debates*, xii. 1089.

† "As Sir David Baird so pressingly demands instructions, it appeared to the Cabinet advisable to direct him in the only case in which it is possible to give

able, during the pressure of the retreat, to give a full description of the state of the army, he sent General Charles Stewart "as the officer best qualified to give you every information you can want, both with respect to our actual situation and the events which have led to it. Had I followed my own opinion as a military man, I should have retired with the army from Salamanca. The Spanish armies were then beaten. I was sensible, however, that had the British been withdrawn, the loss of the cause would have been imputed to their retreat. It was for this reason that I made the march to Sahagun. As a diversion it succeeded. I brought the whole disposable force of the French against this army, and it has been allowed to follow it without a single movement being made to favour my retreat. The people of the Galicias, though armed, made no attempt to stop the passage of the French through their mountains. They abandoned their dwellings at our approach, and drove away their carts, oxen, and everything that could be of the smallest aid to the army. The consequence has been that our sick have been left behind; and when our horses and mules failed, which, on such marches and through such a country, was the case to a great extent, baggage, ammunition, stores, and even money, were necessarily destroyed or abandoned."[1] General Stewart fully confirmed these disastrous details; and the result was, that although they had previously determined to send the army round from Corunna to Lisbon or Cadiz, so as to take up a new defensive line resting on one or other of these places, the Cabinet, at Lord Castlereagh's suggestion, sent out discretionary power to Sir John Moore to bring the army home or take it round to Lisbon, as he might deem it expedient. The instructions arrived after Sir John

37. Lord Castlereagh's instructions to Moore and Baird for the disposal of the army, which retreated to Corunna.

[1] Sir J. Moore to Lord Castlereagh, Corunna, Jan. 13, 1809; Castlereagh Corresp. vii. 26, 27.

him from hence any instructions, to go with his army to Portugal, and not, in the event of his being obliged to re-embark, to bring it immediately home."—LORD CASTLEREAGH *to the* EARL OF CHATHAM, *November* 25, 1808; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, vii. 15.

CHAP. III.

1809.

Moore's lamented death, and Sir David Baird brought it home.*

38. Lord Castlereagh resolves to persevere in the Peninsular contest.

"Sharing with the whole country the grief felt for the untoward termination of the first Spanish campaign, Lord Castlereagh was nowise daunted by it, nor in the least shaken in his determination to continue the contest with the utmost vigour in the Peninsula. After the return of the army from Corunna he had frequent, almost daily, conferences with Sir Arthur Wellesley, and his brother,

* "You will receive enclosed the orders which have been transmitted to Major-General Sherbrooke, now ready to sail from Portsmouth; also instructions from his Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to Mr Frere, directing him to ascertain, without loss of time, the sentiments of the Spanish Government upon the proposed concert in the south of Spain, the necessary preliminary to which must be, that we should have the free use of Cadiz, with a participation in the garrison thereof, as the only fortified position under the protection of which our army can be assembled with advantage, and upon which it may retire in case of disaster."—LORD CASTLEREAGH *to* SIR JOHN MOORE, *January* 14, 1809; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, vii. 28.

"Lord Castlereagh having brought the despatch received from Lieutenant-General Sir John Moore under the consideration of your Majesty's confidential servants, they beg leave humbly to recommend to your Majesty that the orders sent to Sir John Moore, with respect to the disposal of his army, in the event of his re-embarkation from Galicia, should be rendered so far discretionary as to leave it to that officer to decide, according to the state and condition of his troops, whether they can, with advantage to your Majesty's service, be immediately employed in the execution of those orders, or must return home to be refitted and prepared for service."—LORD CASTLEREAGH *to the* KING, *January* 21, 1809; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, vii. 30.

Lord Castlereagh's letter to Sir David Baird on the battle of Corunna and death of Sir John Moore, was conceived in a generous and worthy spirit. "I am commanded by his Majesty to convey to you the satisfaction his Majesty feels in this additional instance of the superior discipline, firmness, and valour which distinguish his army wherever brought into engagement with the enemy, and which reflects high honour on the officers who command the troops; and I am particularly commanded to desire that you will convey to Lieutenant-General Hope, and the general officers of the army, that his Majesty entertains a just sense of their intrepid and meritorious exertions in supporting the glory of the British arms in the battle of Corunna; and you will also convey to the rest of the officers, non-commissioned officers, and soldiers, his Majesty's acknowledgments of their brave and spirited conduct on that occasion. His Majesty feels the strongest regret for the loss of so distinguished and meritorious an officer as Lieutenant-General Sir John Moore, which he considers as a national loss; and whilst his Majesty sensibly regrets the circumstance which compelled you to quit the field early in the action, when you were displaying your accustomed valour in leading the troops into action, it affords his Majesty satisfaction to have observed that your despatch is signed with your own hand, which his Majesty considers as a circumstance encouraging the hope of recovery."—LORD CASTLEREAGH *to* SIR DAVID BAIRD, *January* 24, 1809; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, vii. 31, 32.

General Charles Stewart, who had, with signal gallantry, gone through the whole campaign with Moore, and was able to give them the most valuable information. Both these officers concurred in the opinion that Portugal might be successfully defended by such a force as Great Britain could without difficulty afford to station in that country, and that in this way the fairest opportunity would be afforded for supporting or reviving the war in Spain. The policy of engaging in such a contest, and that with the whole disposable military forces of Great Britain, was still more apparent at this juncture, from the evident approach of a war between France and Austria, and the departure of Napoleon from Astorga with his Guards in the beginning of the Corunna retreat, to combat the new enemy that was arising on the banks of the Danube. In these views Mr Canning entirely concurred; and the result was a determination of the Cabinet to renew the contest in the Peninsula, taking Portugal and Lisbon as a base. Lord Castlereagh accordingly adopted a minute on the defence of Portugal, drawn by Sir Arthur Wellesley, which was laid before the Cabinet, and immediately acted upon. It forms a noble monument of foresight and wisdom.* Reinforcements were

* "I have always been of opinion that Portugal might be defended, whatever might be the result of the contest in Spain; and that in the mean time the measures adopted for the defence of Portugal would be highly useful to the Spaniards in their contest with the French. My notion was that the Portuguese military establishments, upon the footing of 40,000 militia and 30,000 regular troops, ought to be revived, and that, in addition to these troops, his Majesty ought to employ an army in Portugal, amounting to about 20,000 British troops, including about 4000 cavalry. My opinion was that, even if Spain should have been conquered, the French would not have been able to overcome Portugal with a smaller force than 100,000 men; and that, so long as the contest should continue in Spain, this force, if it could be put in a state of activity, would be highly useful to the Spaniards, and might have eventually decided the contest. . . .

"The British force employed in Portugal should, in this view of the question, not be less than 30,000 men; of which number 4000 or 5000 should be cavalry, and there should be a large body of artillery. The whole of the army in Portugal, Portuguese as well as British, should be placed under the command of British officers. The staff of the army, the commissariat in particular, must be British; and these departments must be extensive, in proportion to the strength of the whole army which will act in Portugal, to the number of

CHAP. III. 1809.

sent as rapidly as possible to Lisbon, which raised the force that had been left there to nearly 20,000 men; and as a matter of course Lord Castlereagh appointed Sir Arthur Wellesley to the supreme command, and all his recommendations as to the raising and equipping the Portuguese force were carried into effect. Sir Arthur accordingly embarked from England on the 14th, and landed at Lisbon on the 22d April, taking General Charles Stewart with him as the Adjutant-General of the army. The personal biography of the latter, which commences in the next chapter, forms an interesting link between the great military designs of Lord Castlereagh and their marvellous execution by the genius and the indomitable spirit of Wellington.

35. Lord Castlereagh's measures for increasing the military force of the country.

Having thus launched Sir Arthur Wellesley into a fresh career in Portugal, Lord Castlereagh was not unmindful of the necessity of the most vigorous measures to support him in it. In the first moments of alarm consequent on the Corunna retreat, he despatched 5000 men at once to the Tagus, either to remain there or proceed to Cadiz, as

detached posts which it will be necessary to occupy, and with a view to the difficulties of providing and distributing supplies in that country. In regard to the detail of these measures, I recommend that the British army in Portugal should be reinforced, as soon as possible, with some companies of British riflemen; with 3000 British or German cavalry; that the complement of ordnance with that army should be made thirty pieces of cannon, of which two brigades of 9-pounders; that these pieces of ordnance should be completely horsed; that twenty pieces of brass 12-pounder ordnance, upon travelling carriages, should be sent to Portugal, with a view to the occupation of certain positions in that country; that a corps of engineers for an army of 60,000 men should be sent there, and a corps of artillery for sixty pieces of cannon. I understand that the British army now in Portugal consists of 20,000 men, including cavalry. It should be made up 20,000 infantry at least, as soon as possible, by additions of riflemen and other good infantry, which by this time may have been refitted after the campaign in Spain."*—*Memorandum, March* 7, 1809; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, vii. 39-41.

* It is proper to notice that this very remarkable minute is printed in the *second edition*, in eight volumes, of the *Wellington Despatches* as Lord Wellington's. It is not to be found in the first edition, in twelve volumes, at all. On the other hand, the late Marquess of Londonderry has printed it in the *Castlereagh Correspondence*, vii. 39, as Lord Castlereagh's. Judging from internal evidence, the author would be inclined to ascribe it to the Duke; but, knowing Lord Londonderry's extreme accuracy and scrupulous regard to the authorship of papers, he consulted his esteemed friend Mr Montgomery Martin on the subject, who *found the original in Wellington's handwriting* among his papers. It is probable the Marquess of Londonderry was misled in claiming it for his brother by its being *adopted* by him in a Cabinet Minute, signed by him as War Minister.

circumstances should require.* He immediately after submitted a draft of a plan by which he proposed to augment the strength of the regular army, which deserves particular notice, as it was in all substantial particulars acted upon by Government, and formed the basis of the system by which the military force of the country was organised, and its strength drawn forth during the whole remainder of the war. Lord Castlereagh's memorandum began with these words: "Under the present circumstances of the war, and the amount of your Majesty's disposable force employed in operations on the Continent, your Majesty's confidential servants consider it their indispensable duty humbly to recommend to your Majesty to call the attention of Parliament, immediately on its meeting, to the adoption of such measures for increasing the regular army as may enable your Majesty adequately to sustain the contest abroad, without thereby unduly exposing the security of your Majesty's dominions at home. . . . Your Majesty's confidential servants are fully aware of the magnitude of the exertion which your Majesty's subjects are thus called upon to make; but they humbly conceive that it is not more than commensurate with the exigency of the crisis for which your Majesty's Government consider themselves bound in duty to your Majesty to make every exertion to provide."[1]

[1] Lord Castlereagh to the King, Jan. 22, 1809; Castlereagh Corresp. viii. 193.

40. His plan for increasing the regular army.

Lord Castlereagh's plan was that the whole regiments of the line, with the exception of the 60th (Rifles), which was to be of six, should consist of two battalions of the effective strength of 800, 1000, or 1200 respectively. These first battalions would give, he calculated, 100,000

* "It appearing of the utmost importance that a British corps should be in readiness in the Tagus to proceed to Cadiz at the shortest notice, in case circumstances should render the Spaniards desirous of receiving the aid of British troops for the security of that place (and it is highly desirable that the amount of force now under the orders of Sir John Moore should not be broken in upon for this object), your Majesty's confidential servants are therefore induced humbly to recommend that the 5000 infantry now under orders should forthwith proceed to the Tagus."—LORD CASTLEREAGH'S *Memorandum, January* 1809; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, viii. 193.

CHAP. III. 1809.

disposable men, who were to be liable to serve in any part of the world. The second were in every instance to amount to 1000 men, to be raised by ballot, but to be not liable to serve beyond the British and Channel Islands. This force, he observed, would be inferior to that raised for the militia service in Great Britain and Ireland during the late war, but it would "possess this marked superiority over the present militia, that it would be commanded by officers of the army, whose habits and feelings would naturally introduce among their men a predilection for the regular service, and that its services would be equally applicable to Ireland as to Britain." In addition to this, "I would recommend that the ten royal veteran battalions should be retained, with the power of placing such of their officers as may from time to time become, through age and infirmities, unfit for duty, on a retired pay becoming their respective ranks, and referring to their last years devoted to their country. I would place all the rest of the force of the country in local militia, yeomanry cavalry, and volunteer corps; the latter composed of officers and men who are willing to enrol themselves in corps of not less than 600, under engagements to subject themselves to such drills as may be deemed necessary to fit them to act with regular troops, to serve, in case of emergency, in any part of Great Britain, and to support themselves entirely at their own expense (arms excepted), till called out on permanent duty, when they should receive military pay, and be in every respect amenable to *martial* law. The local militia to be formed upon the same military principle as the other parts of the army. The result would prove, I conclude, as follows: The militia becomes, what it ought constitutionally to be, the basis of our national force. The local militia assumes the uniform, colours, and every other article of equipment of the regiment of the line belonging to its county. In short, it adopts the county regiment as part of itself, and gives

every encouragement to its men to enlist into this corps. Let the men of the second battalion receive the same encouragement to extend their services into the first battalion, and their places be immediately supplied by volunteers at a low bounty from the local militia. I say by volunteers, because I do not believe there would be found any difficulty in filling up these vacancies; but if, contrary to expectation, there should be any, a ballot must be resorted to, because the very essence of the plan I venture to submit for consideration is the absolute certainty of the second battalions being kept complete as long as their services are required. It would by these means present the fairest prospect of placing the recruiting of regiments on the most certain and respectable footing, without at all preventing their employing the means now in practice, if they found it desirable. My opinion of the eligibility of this, or of some plan of the same nature, has been long formed; and the experience of each year more and more convinces me that every measure adopted for the increase of our military force which does not place it on an *assured* and *permanent* footing is elusory, and inadequate to the object. After the long and repeated warnings we have had, it will be most unpardonable if we are not prepared to repel the attack of our enemy by efforts commensurate with the difficulties and dangers with which we are threatened, and the importance of the objects for which we contend." * [1]

[1] Lord Castlereagh's Minute, Feb. 6, 1809; Castlereagh Corresp. viii. 194-197.

Such was Lord Castlereagh's plan for the permanent

* The force which Lord Castlereagh calculated this plan would produce was as follows:—

Regulars, first battalion exclusive of six battalions of 60th infantry,	100,000
Second battalions offered by him,	100,000
Local militia, at least	200,000
Volunteer cavalry,	32,000
Volunteers,	100,000
Total,	532,000

—Lord Castlereagh's *Memorandum, February* 6, 1809; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, viii. 196.

CHAP. III.

1809.

41. Which is, with one modification, adopted by Government.

military establishment of the country, and experience has now abundantly tested its wisdom and expedience. It was, with one modification, adopted by Government, and formed the basis of the noble military force which carried Wellington in triumph through the Peninsular campaigns, and brought the war at length to a glorious termination. The only change made was, that instead of the system of second battalions being thoroughly, it was only partially, established, and the old system of the regular militia kept up by ballot from the counties, was adhered to. The regular army, however, was kept up at its required level, and all the losses of the Peninsular campaigns supplied by the annual volunteering from the regular militia, while it in its turn was adequately supplied without having recourse to the ballot from the local militia, which was raised partly by that means, partly by voluntary enlistment. There can be no doubt, however, that the substitution of second battalions of the regiments of the line for the regular militia would have been a very great improvement, and that in any similar crisis which may occur the nation would do well to adopt it. The reason is, that by making these *local second battalions* a part of the regular army, you would get a much superior class, both of officers and men, to that which could possibly be hoped for if the regiments entered were mere temporary corps leading to no durable employment or prospects to either. You would get young men intending to make arms their profession, instead of broken-down tradesmen or hangers-on on great families, for the former; and real soldiers, instead of the riff-raff of great towns, for the latter. Lord Castlereagh's plan of making the militia—the constitutional force of Great Britain—the basis of the whole military establishment; raising the first or local force, only called out twenty-eight days in the year, and therefore not interfering with other employments, by ballot; the local regulars or second battalions by enlistment from them, supplemented,

if necessary, by the ballot; and the disposable regulars or first battalions by enlistment from the second,—met all the requirements of a powerful and efficient system of military defence. For it leads to the army being regarded, not as a means of providing for needy dependants, or a harbour for the destitute in the chances of life, but as a profession in which duty is to be performed and honour acquired; it brings forward the men abreast of their officers in the necessary apprenticeship to this noble service; and it lays the foundation, in long previous knowledge and acting together, for that mutual confidence and reliance on each other in danger, which, more than either discipline or drill, contribute to the strength of old soldiers.

42. Difficulties regarding Sir John Cradock in Portugal.

Although the appointment of Sir Arthur Wellesley to the chief command in Portugal was so obviously called for by the circumstances, yet it was with no small difficulty, and only by very great temper and address, that the momentous choice was made. Sir Arthur being one of the youngest Lieutenant-Generals, there were many who insisted, as his seniors, on their right to be preferred. Sir John Cradock's claims, in particular, were very strong and urgent; for not only was he much higher in point of military rank than Sir Arthur Wellesley, but he was at the moment actually in command in Portugal, and had conducted himself with great firmness and judgment during the very trying time in the preceding winter, when he had been left with only 13,000 men at the time of Sir John Moore's retreat to Corunna. The wording of Lord Castlereagh's letter to the King, recommending an officer so much younger to supersede this respectable veteran, shows how strongly the difficulty was felt.* To surmount it, Lord Castlereagh proposed to

* "Your Majesty's confidential servants having had under their consideration the amount of force (in infantry amounting to about 18,000 men) which will be assembled in Portugal upon the arrival of Major-General Hill's corps from Cork, and the return of Major-General Sherbrooke and Major-General Mackenzie's from Cadiz, . . . beg leave humbly to propose to your Majesty, that

CHAP. III.

1809.

confer upon Sir John Cradock the situation of Governor of Gibraltar, one of the most dignified and lucrative under the Crown; and he accompanied this, not only with the pleasing assurance on the part of Government of their entire satisfaction with his past services, but with the observation, to which the desperate situation of affairs at that period in the Peninsula gave an air of probability, that, though removed for the moment to a less active scene, it might ere long become far otherwise,[1] and, as in 1782, be

[1] Lord Castlereagh to Gen. Beresford, Feb. 15, and to Gen. Hill, March 12, 1809; Castlereagh Corresp. vii. 34, 42.

Sir John Cradock should be appointed to succeed Sir Hew Dalrymple in the command at Gibraltar, and that the chief command in Portugal should be intrusted to Sir Arthur Wellesley. In submitting the latter appointment to your Majesty's approbation, your Majesty's servants have not been unmindful of the inconvenience that might arise in case of any considerable increase of this force, from Sir Arthur Wellesley's being so young a Lieutenant-General. But as any material increase of the army in Portugal cannot be at present looked to as probable, either from the state of the regiments at home, or the immediate circumstances of the war, they humbly conceive that your Majesty's service (without prejudice to the claims of the distinguished officers in your Majesty's army, who are his seniors in rank) may have the benefit of Sir Arthur Wellesley's being employed where he has had the good fortune of being successful, and that it will remain open for your Majesty's future consideration to make a different arrangement of the command, if, under all the circumstances, it shall appear to your Majesty proper to confide it to a general officer of higher rank."—LORD CASTLEREAGH *to the* KING, *March* 26, 1809; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, vii. 43.

To Sir John Cradock, Lord Castlereagh wrote at the same time:—"In proposing to you the command at Gibraltar, I feel that it is, in the first instance, transferring you to a less active scene; but the time may not be very distant when the picture may be reversed, and the eyes of the country be turned, as they were in the year 1782, to Gibraltar, as the point of contest between the two powers, where as much solid service may be rendered, and as much personal glory acquired, as at the head of an army. It is with this view, and under a conviction that if Spain is conquered Gibraltar will be seriously attacked, that the command is offered to you, and it is done so under the conviction that this trust cannot be placed in better hands; and his Majesty has very graciously authorised me to intimate to you that he proposes to give you the local rank of General at Gibraltar. . . . It would neither be kind nor manly in me not to avow that the advice the King's Ministers have felt it their duty to offer to the King on the present occasion, has been dictated by the peculiar value they are disposed to attach to Sir A. W.'s services generally, and particularly in Portugal. You will believe me sincere when I assure you, with respect to yourself, in addition to much personal confidence, they feel very strongly indeed; with respect to the whole of your conduct in Portugal, which, in times and under circumstances of peculiar difficulty, has in every instance met with their unqualified approbation, and, I can truly say, fulfilled every wish and expectation I had or could have formed, when you were selected for the command."—LORD CASTLEREAGH *to* SIR JOHN CRADOCK, *March* 30, 1809; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, vii. 44, 45.

the battle-field between the two nations. The patriotic veteran believed or affected to believe the pleasing illusion, and retired to Gibraltar without further complaint. At the same time, Major-General, afterwards Sir Rowland Hill, was appointed second in command; Generals Sherbrooke, Mackenzie, and others, destined to future fame, to the direction of brigades; and General Beresford to the charge of the Portuguese forces.

43. Lord Castlereagh's instructions to Sir A. Wellesley. April 2, 1809.

Lord Castlereagh's instructions to Sir Arthur Wellesley for the conduct of the war were as follows:— "Your attention will be directed, in the first instance, to prepare and equip the British army for the field. You will, in the next place, direct your utmost exertion to the bringing forward the Portuguese army, and rendering it capable of co-operating with his Majesty's troops. In furtherance of the latter object, in addition to the arrangements already made, you will make such requisitions from time to time, either to the Portuguese Government or to the Government at home, as upon communication with General Beresford you may deem requisite for rendering the Portuguese troops fit for service. The defence of Portugal you will consider as the first and immediate object of your attention. But, as the security of Portugal can only be effectually provided for in connection with the defence of the Peninsula in the larger sense, his Majesty on this account, as well as from the unabated interest he takes in the cause of Spain, leaves it to your judgment to decide, when your army shall be advanced on the frontier of Portugal, how your efforts can be best combined with the Spanish, as well as the Portuguese troops, in support of the common cause. In any movements you may undertake, you will, however, keep in mind that, until you receive further orders, your operations must necessarily be conducted with especial reference to the protection of that country."[1] Sir John Stuart, also, who had the command of the troops in Sicily, 20,000 strong, of whom 10,000 were deemed disposable,

[1] Castlereagh Corresp. vii. 74.

CHAP. III. 1809.

received orders to be ready to co-operate, in the manner that might be deemed advisable, in the east of Spain.*

44. Force collected in Portugal under Sir A. Wellesley.

Such was the vanity and self-sufficiency of the Spanish Government, that, even after all the disasters of the campaign, the fall of Madrid, the Corunna retreat, and the falling back of their armies from Castile towards the Sierra Morena, they *declined* the proffered assistance of the British Government, which Lord Castlereagh had sent to Cadiz; and General Sherbrooke, who had arrived there, was not allowed to land, and returned to Lisbon. They were more afraid of the heretic English than the hostile French! This extraordinary ebullition of jealousy was, however, in the end attended with good effects. It led to the concentration of the whole British troops in the Peninsula in Portugal, where, on Sir A. Wellesley's arrival, they amounted to 23,455 men, of whom 4270 were cavalry.† Such was the force with which this great general commenced his career in the Peninsula, which he only left five years afterwards to carry his victorious arms into France. When he began the struggle, Spain was occupied by 250,000 French, of whom 150,000 were disposable, and might be brought into the field.

* "Every day's intelligence makes me additionally desirous of hearing that a British force has shown itself on the side of Catalonia, where its services would be of the utmost importance. I hope the Court of Palermo will feel that, even to their ultimate views in Italy, the completion of the great work in Spain is of more consequence than an imperfect attempt in Italy, which, without the co-operation of some important military power, can hardly expect permanently to deliver itself, assisted only by a small British corps, with very limited means of furnishing either arms or military stores for arming the people."—LORD CASTLEREAGH *to* SIR JOHN STUART, *November* 1, 1808; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, vii. 1.

† These forces were as follows :—

Infantry—		
Guards,	2,427	
Line,	11,589	
Do. from Cork,	4,139	
24th Foot,	780	
		18,935
Cavalry,		4,270
Waggon Train,		250
Total,		23,455

—*State, April* 2, 1809; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, vii. 48.

45. Lord Castlereagh's and Napoleon's opposite plan of operations.

One great advantage, however, had already, notwithstanding this disproportion, been gained to the independence and security of Britain by the progress of the Peninsular war, and that was, the destruction of the whole left wing of the great naval confederacy which it had occasioned. Unmarked amidst the blaze of Wellington's career, and forgotten from the lustre of Trafalgar, this was a matter of the very highest importance, which, if events had fallen out otherwise than they did, might have come to exercise a decisive influence on the fortunes of England. *After* Trafalgar Napoleon had still, including the Dutch and Spanish, one hundred sail of the line at his disposal ready for sea; and to this force the treaty of Tilsit, which gave him the prospect of the entire command of the naval force of the Baltic, added fifty more. He was building twenty or twenty-five sail of the line yearly; and in a few years he expected to have one hundred and eighty sail of the line ready for sea, manned by the whole sailors of continental Europe; and with these, he has himself told us, he meant to have fought what he called his *battle of Actium*, in which England must have been overthrown, and which would have terminated, by our subjugation, the long duel between the two nations.* He had no intention of precipitating hostilities; deeply laid, his design was intended to be cautiously executed, and no attempt made to carry it into effect till his force had become so overwhelming, that, as with his land forces on entering Russia, success had become a matter of absolute certainty.

* "I was resolved," said Napoleon, "to renew at Cherbourg the wonders of Egypt. I had already raised in the sea my pyramid—I would also have had my Lake Mareotis. My great object was to concentrate at Cherbourg all our maritime forces, and in time they would have been immense, in order to be able to deal out a grand stroke to the enemy. I was establishing my ground so as to bring the two nations, as it were, body to body. The ultimate issue could not be doubtful, for we had forty millions of French against fifteen millions of English. I could have terminated the contest by *a battle of Actium*. When, by these means, England came to wrestle hand to hand with France, and the advantage she derived from her insular situation was at an end, she must necessarily have fallen. The nation which depends on a population of seventeen millions must, in the end, sink before that which has the command of forty."—LAS CASES, v. 8-14.

CHAP. III. 1809.

Till this point of superiority was gained, the maritime war was to be defensive only. The idea was grandly conceived, and it was on the very verge of being realised. The battle of Friedland, and treaty of Tilsit, which gave him the entire command of the Continent, seemed to render it a matter of certainty. But great as was the conception and the means of its realisation, it was met by a conception as grand, a combination as effective. This was, to take advantage of the insular position and naval superiority of Great Britain at the moment, and wield a considerable military force in such a manner against first one, then another part of the enemy's dominions, as might destroy or neutralise his different naval establishments, and thus render abortive all his combinations. Thirty or forty thousand men skilfully disposed would be amply sufficient for this purpose, and would keep three hundred thousand on the alert, for no one could tell where the blow was first to fall.

46. Complete discomfiture of Napoleon's left naval wing by Lord Castlereagh.

The success which had already attended this counter plan of operations was entirely due to Lord Castlereagh, and had been such as to justify the most sanguine hopes for the future. Thirty thousand men sent to the Baltic had taken the Copenhagen fleet, consisting of twenty sail of the line and fifteen frigates, retained in our alliance the Swedish fleet of twelve more, and thus so completely neutralised the Russian naval force, that *five English sail* of the line, in addition to the Swedish, sufficed to keep them blockaded in Cronstadt. Thus was the right wing of Napoleon's great naval confederacy taken or paralysed. The same troops, transported to the Peninsula, had still more completely destroyed his left wing. The vigorous measures adopted with the Court of Lisbon had extricated ten Portuguese sail of the line from his grasp; the victory of Vimeira had put twelve Russian sail of the line into the hands of the British; and five French sail of the line, the remnant of Trafalgar, had been obliged to surrender at Cadiz to the Spaniards. The whole Spanish fleet, number-

ing twenty-four sail of the line, had been withdrawn from the French alliance. Altogether, the Peninsular war had already cost Napoleon fifty sail of the line, in addition to as many lost to him for efficient service in the Baltic from the results of the Copenhagen expedition. Within two years after the treaty of Tilsit, which seemed to put the whole naval forces of the Continent at his feet, Napoleon had lost a hundred sail of the line, his two wings were completely destroyed, and all this mainly by the operations of LAND FORCES. The danger of invasion was removed for a very long period from Great Britain, if not altogether taken away. This too had been done at the very time when the conquests of France had attained their highest point of elevation. Such, in so short a time, had been the results of Lord Castlereagh's counteracting system of warfare,* immediately after Napoleon's star had been highest in the ascendant!

47. Extreme difficulty of getting specie in the Peninsula, and Lord Castlereagh's efforts to obtain it.

In the midst of these great undertakings, when each party was straining every nerve to augment their military and naval resources, and, of course, a corresponding expenditure was going forward on both sides, a new difficulty of the most formidable kind arose, which embarrassed the British Government more than any other down to the very end of the war. This was the difficulty of getting *specie* to carry on the Continental operations. By the suspension of cash payments, indeed, the difficulty arising from the absorption of the precious metals in foreign warfare was entirely at an end, so far as domestic industry was concerned; but, for military

* The account of these successes stands thus:—

	Line.	Frigates.
Taken at Copenhagen,	20	15
Preserved of Swedish fleet,	12	8
Neutralised of Russian,	17	9
Withdrawn from Lisbon to Brazils,	8	...
Taken at Lisbon,	2	...
Taken there of Russian,	12	...
Taken at Cadiz,	5	...
Withdrawn from Napoleon of Spanish,	24	12
Lost to Napoleon in two years,	100	44

CHAP. III. 1809.

operations abroad, it was absolutely necessary to have specie; and it was with the utmost difficulty, and at a very heavy cost, that it could be obtained. This difficulty became almost insurmountable in the spring of 1809, in consequence of the vast preparations making in France, Italy, and Germany, for the Austrian war, in addition to the demand for money, already so great from the requirements of the Spanish contest on both sides. Gold, as the most valuable and portable metal, rapidly rose in value, as compared with silver or copper. A new guinea, or a napoleon, was eagerly bought for 28s. Sir Arthur Wellesley, who felt all his movements, and especially his means of transport, grievously fettered by this scarcity of gold and silver, was extremely urgent on the subject; and Lord Castlereagh, who was perfectly aware of the necessity of providing a supply of these essential articles, made the utmost efforts, by means of his agents in every direction, to obtain them.*

48. Strange proposition of Marshal Soult, which is declined by Castlereagh and Sir A. Wellesley.

A very strange offer, as is well known, was made in a circuitous way, and with great caution, by some of the chief officers of Marshal Soult's army, which had penetrated from Corunna to Oporto, to seize their general, throw off their allegiance to the Emperor, make peace with England, and dethrone Napoleon.† The

* "The scarcity of specie is become the subject of much anxiety. The supply sent by the Rosamond and Niobe (which left this country early in June), of dollars, doubloons, and Portugal gold, to the amount of about £230,000 sterling, arriving so immediately after that you received from Cadiz, will have relieved your wants for the present; but as there is not more than £100,000 which can now be sent from hence, in addition to what you have, till dollars arrive from South America (the period of which is uncertain), it becomes a subject of the most serious consideration for you to concert with the Commissary-General how you can realise the funds necessary for your army in the Peninsula by bills on England."—LORD CASTLEREAGH *to* SIR ARTHUR WELLESLEY, *London, July* 11, 1809; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, vii. 95.

"Huskisson will write to you on the subject of money. A considerable sum is on its way to the Tagus; but so great is the pressure, that I have to recommend your drawing all possible aid both from Cadiz and Gibraltar—in short, wherever a bill upon England can be realised."—LORD CASTLEREAGH *to* SIR ARTHUR WELLESLEY, *June* 11, 1809; *Ibid.*, vii. 84.

† Soult, wholly ignorant of this conspiracy, was at the same time dreaming of procuring the crown of Portugal for himself, and becoming, like Murat, the monarch of a kingdom dependent upon France.—See THIERS, xi. 72-75.

proposal was in itself sufficiently tempting, the more especially as a war had by this time broken out between France and Austria, and the whole disposable forces of the Emperor were required for the seat of war on the Danube. Sir Arthur accordingly lost no time in transmitting the information and offer, which was communicated through an officer named Argenton, to Lord Castlereagh, who immediately laid it before the Cabinet, by whom it was seriously considered. But, although fully alive to any such movement, which might be the prelude to a general breaking up of the military power which had so long oppressed the Continent, the Cabinet adopted the opinion of Lord Castlereagh, that in an affair of such delicacy and importance the utmost caution was necessary; that this offer was so strange that doubts might be entertained of its sincerity; and that the only safe course was to leave the matter in the hands of the General on the spot, to be dealt with as to him might seem advisable. This advice was unanimously adopted, and discretionary powers on the subject were sent out to Sir Arthur Wellesley, who very wisely steered clear of the business, and prosecuted the war without soiling his hands by the contact of treason.*

* "The despatch which relates to the communication from Captain Argenton has occupied the immediate attention of his Majesty's Government. They are fully impressed with the important consequences which might be expected to flow from the revolt of any considerable part of the French army at the present moment, which, if it should be followed, would afford the surest means of dissolving the power against which we are now contending. But in proportion as they feel all the importance of this view of the subject, they cannot disguise from themselves the doubts that must attach to the proposition in point of sincerity, the obstacles that stand in the way of its successful execution, and, finally, to the difficulties which present themselves at the outset in reconciling the measures to be taken with our present relations with the Governments of Spain and Portugal. With this general view of the subject, I am to signify to you his Majesty's approbation of the caution with which you have received the overture alluded to; and I am to desire that you will continue to observe the same prudent line of conduct, taking care that any arrangement which you may adopt with the French army, so far as it affects the interests of Spain or Portugal, shall be made subject to the ratification and concurrence of their respective Governments. With the above restriction, his Majesty is pleased to confide to your discretion to decide according to circumstances on the spot, by what course the objects his Majesty has in view can best be promoted. You will not fail to hold in mind that nothing short of

CHAP. III.

1809.

49. Lord Castlereagh on the passage of the Douro. May 26, 1809.

The short but brilliant campaign which followed, commencing with the splendid passage of the Douro, and ending with the entire expulsion of the French, with the loss of their whole artillery and baggage, from the north of Portugal, will be recounted in the chapter relating to Sir Charles Stewart, who bore a distinguished part in that operation. Lord Castlereagh was extremely rejoiced at Sir Arthur's early success, and exerted himself to the very utmost to strengthen his hands, and supply the numerous wants of his army, now launched into active operations, nearly the whole of which, in consequence of the penury to which the country had been reduced by the French exactions, had to be furnished from the British Islands.* He obtained the consent of the King to a reinforcement of 5000 men being sent to Sir Arthur from the regiments stationed in Jersey and Guernsey, which was accordingly despatched, and arrived in time to put his army in a condition to advance into Spain, and gain the memorable victory of Talavera. In conveying to Sir Arthur and the troops under his command his Majesty's thanks for this gallant achievement, he said—"The rapidity of your movements to the northward, if not attended with the complete reduction of Soult's corps, has, it is to be presumed, for a length of time disqualified the remains of his army from acting

the most unequivocal proofs of determination to turn their arms against Buonaparte could induce the Spaniards to permit a French army (more especially one which has acted in the manner Soult's corps is reported to have done in Galicia) to retire unmolested through Spain, with the power to change its purpose at any moment on its march, to take up new and perhaps more advantageous positions, or even to concentrate themselves with other corps, the better to prosecute their operations in other parts of Spain."—LORD CASTLEREAGH *to* SIR ARTHUR WELLESLEY, *May* 16, 1809; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, vii. 65, 66.

* "DEAR WELLESLEY,—Accept my congratulations and thanks for what you have already accomplished, and my best wishes for your future success and personal glory. I am doing what I can to promote it by strengthening you from hence, and shall press everything forward as much as possible. If you want another regiment of cavalry *very much*, send transports for 800 horses to Cork, in which I will send you the 1st Dragoons, unless events should require us to give it another destination."—LORD CASTLEREAGH *to* SIR ARTHUR WELLESLEY, *May* 26, 1809; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, vii. 71.

offensively against Portugal, and left you at liberty to prosecute operations against Victor. The decision and skill with which the British army has been led, and the animated bravery displayed by the officers and troops in the passage of the Douro, cannot fail to confirm the confidence which they are entitled to feel in their own superiority over the enemy, and to prepare the way for future successes. The result of the present operation, under the relative circumstances of the two armies, has in no respect fallen short of what might have been expected from the talents of the General and the gallantry of the troops." [1]

[1] Lord Castlereagh to Sir A. Wellesley, June 6, 1809; Castlereagh Corresp. vii. 75.

50. Lord Castlereagh authorises the British advance into Spain.

It had been, as already shown, a part of the instructions to Sir A. Wellesley, not to extend his movements beyond the Portuguese frontier unless he had previously obtained the consent of the British Cabinet. After the success on the Douro, and the disabling of Soult's army, Lord Castlereagh deemed the time arrived when such extended operations might with advantage be undertaken; the more especially as Napoleon in person was engaged in a struggle for life or death with the Austrians on the Danube, which absorbed all the reinforcements he could spare; and that he already contemplated a diversion of the most important kind, on a great scale, with the British forces in Flanders. He accordingly sent authority to Sir Arthur to extend his operations into Spain, in order that he might be enabled to co-operate the better with the Spanish armies against the common enemy, beyond the provinces immediately adjacent to the Portuguese frontier, provided he should be of opinion that the doing so was material, in a military point of view, to the success of operations, and not inconsistent with the safety of Portugal. Fortified with this authority, Sir Arthur Wellesley crossed the frontier, advanced to Talavera, and fought the memorable battle there, in which General Charles Stewart, Lord Castlereagh's brother, bore a distinguished part, as will appear in a subsequent chapter.[2]

[2] Lord Castlereagh to Sir A. Wellesley, May 25, 1809; Castlereagh Corresp. vii. 71.

CHAP. III.

1809.

This battle, which roused to the very highest pitch the military enthusiasm of Great Britain, and produced a profound impression on the world, excited in the greatest degree the heroic and chivalrous spirit of Lord Castlereagh. In supporting the motion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the thanks of Parliament to Lord Wellington and the officers and soldiers who had combated at Talavera, the noble lord pronounced an eloquent eulogium on the General and soldiers who had achieved this great success, which will be given in a subsequent chapter.[1]

51. Lord Castlereagh's striking speech in Parliament on the battle of Talavera. Feb. 1, 1810.

[1] Parl. Deb. xv. 294-301.

Although the glorious victory which called forth this glowing panegyric was followed by a retreat to Portugal, in consequence of the concentration of all the French forces in the Peninsula against Lord Wellington's army, yet a very great advantage, which in the end proved the salvation of the Peninsula, had been gained by this forward movement. That very concentration had defeated all the projects of the enemy. Catalonia, Valencia, Andalusia, Estremadura, obtained a breathing time to recruit their armies and repair their losses. Galicia, Asturias, and part of Leon were permanently freed; the projected attack upon Portugal postponed for a year; and leisure thus gained for Wellington to form the lines of Torres Vedras, which at length opposed a permanent barrier to the French progress. The British General, too, had obtained one piece of information of essential service for the future success of the war. He had seen the Spanish armies, acted with them, and learned how utterly incapable they were of carrying on any combined operations, or acting with steadiness or efficiency in the field of battle.* This knowledge, which all the private letters from the troops engaged amply confirmed, was of the

52. Advantages gained by the advance to Talavera and subsequent retreat, which is approved by Castlereagh.

* "My public letter will give you some idea of my situation. It is one of some embarrassment; but I think I shall get the better of my embarrassments, I hope, without fighting another desperate battle, which would really cripple us so much as to render all our efforts useless. I certainly should get the better of everything if I could manage Cuesta, but his temper and disposition are so bad that that is impossible. . . . We are miserably supplied with provisions, and I don't know how to remedy this evil. The Spanish armies are now so numerous that they eat up the whole country; they have no magazines, nor have

utmost importance, because it dispelled those extravagant and unfounded ideas as to the capabilities of the Spanish armies, which the victories they had at first gained, when acting with regular troops, and their incessant boasting since that time, had engendered in the public mind, and caused expectations, impossible to be realised, to be formed as to the result of joint operations. Lord Castlereagh, who was fully informed and perfectly aware of all these particulars, entirely approved of Wellington's retreat to Portugal in the autumn of 1809, and gave his sanction to the movement in his official instructions.*

we, nor can we collect any, and there is a scramble for everything. I think the battle of the 28th is likely to be of great use to the Spaniards, but I don't think them yet in a state of discipline to contend with the French, and I prefer infinitely to endeavour to remove them from this part of Spain by manœuvre to the trial of another pitched battle. The French, in the last, threw their whole force upon us; and although it did not exactly succeed, or will not succeed in future, we shall lose great numbers of men which we can but ill afford; and we cannot attempt to relieve ourselves from the weight of the attack by bringing forward the Spanish troops, owing to their miserable state of discipline, and their want of officers properly qualified. The troops are entirely incapable of performing any manœuvre, however simple; they would get into irretrievable confusion, and the result would probably be the loss of everything."—LORD WELLINGTON *to* LORD CASTLEREAGH, *Talavera, August* 1, 1809; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, vii. 100.

"The Spanish artillery are, as far as I have seen of them, unexceptionable; but it is lamentable to see how bad the infantry is, and how unequal to a contest with the French. They are armed, I believe, well; they are badly accoutred, not having the means of saving their ammunition from the rain; not clothed, in some instances, at all. . . . Their discipline appears to be confined to placing them in the ranks three deep at very close order, and to the manual exercise. Bassicourt's corps, which was supposed to be the best in Cuesta's army, and was engaged on our left in the mountains in the battle of Talavera, was kept in check throughout the day by one French battalion. This corps has since run away from the bridge of Arzobispo, leaving its guns, and many of the men, according to the usual Spanish custom, throwing away their arms. This practice of running away and throwing off arms, accoutrements, and clothing, is fatal to everything excepting a reassembly of the men in a state of nature, who as regularly perform the same manœuvre the next time an occasion offers. Nearly two thousand ran off on the evening of the 27th, from the battle of Talavera, not a hundred yards from the place where I was standing, who were neither attacked, nor threatened with any attack, and who were frightened only by the noise of their own fire. They left their arms and accoutrements on the ground, their officers went with them; and they and the fugitive cavalry plundered the baggage of the British army which had been sent to the rear. Many others went whom I did not see."—LORD WELLINGTON *to* LORD CASTLEREAGH, *August* 25 1809; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, vii. 110, 111.

* "I am commanded to signify to you his Majesty's entire approbation o your proceedings as stated in your despatches. The considerations which determined you to decline undertaking any further operations till the wants of

CHAP. III. 1809.

53. Lord Castlereagh's measures for the defence of Portugal. Sept., 14, 1809.

Foreseeing that any co-operation with the loose and undisciplined armies and impracticable haughty generals of Spain was at present not to be thought of, and anticipating ere long a serious struggle for the defence of Portugal, the next care of Lord Castlereagh was to concert measures with Lord Wellington for its protection, and the measures necessary to secure the retreat of his troops in case of disaster. With this view, he wrote to him on 14th September in the following terms—remarkable as showing how clearly he foresaw and was providing for the Torres Vedras campaign:—"As the return of the British army to Portugal will afford you an opportunity of turning your undivided attention to the defence of that kingdom, I have to request that you will, as early as possible, transmit to me, for the information of his Majesty's Government, a full report upon that subject, stating your opinion of its defencibility, with what force British and Portuguese, and at what annual expense. You will consider the question of maintaining Portugal in the distinct cases; first, of the utmost effort the enemy can be expected to make against it by any probable disposition of the military force now in the Peninsula; secondly, of the French force being largely reinforced,

your army shall be fully and satisfactorily supplied, and every arrangement made which may appear to you necessary for the protection of your army against similar embarrassments in future, has received his Majesty's entire approbation."—LORD CASTLEREAGH *to* SIR ARTHUR WELLESLEY, *August* 12, 1809; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, vii. 101.

"I am commanded to signify to your Lordship his Majesty's approbation of the conduct you have pursued, as detailed in your despatches of the 2d, 8th, and 21st August. The considerations which have influenced your determination to fall back on the frontier of Portugal, not only appear to have warranted that decision, but to have rendered it indispensable for the supply of the army; and if the Spanish Government have to regret the loss of your support, they can only attribute it to their own want of resources, or to their inability to call them forth. The judgment which marked your determination at the critical moment the step was taken to retire behind the Tagus; the success and ability with which your retreat, encumbered with the wounded, has been conducted, through a country difficult in itself, and destitute of supplies; and the determination you have shown to regulate your operations with as much attention to the safety and health of your troops as to their reputation and glory, have received his Majesty's entire approbation."—LORD CASTLEREAGH *to* LORD WELLINGTON, *September* 14, 1809; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, vii. 119, 120.

should a peace in Germany leave Buonaparte at liberty to turn his efforts in that direction. You will also state your opinion upon the practicability of embarking the British army in the Tagus (regard being had to its local circumstances), in the event of its being obliged to fall back for that purpose in the presence of a superior enemy. And further, you will suggest such measures as may appear to you necessary to be adopted within the country, either with a view to its defence, or which, in the event of its evacuation by the British army becoming necessary, should precede such an evacuation, with a view to the interests of the Prince Regent, and to the counteraction of the designs of the enemy; and in the former alternative you will state at what expense, and within what period of time, the measures you would recommend for placing Portugal in an adequate state of defence could be carried into effect."[1] This despatch, prophetic and suggestive of the lines of Torres Vedras and the development of Sir Arthur Wellesley's memorable minute on the defence of Portugal of 7th March 1809, already given, was the LAST which, as Minister at War, he ever addressed to Lord Wellington. Within a few days after he resigned his office, in consequence of an intrigue which involved him in a personal conflict with Mr Canning, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the particulars of which, as well as of the great expedition in which it originated, must now be given.

[1] Castlereagh Corresp. vii. 120, 121.

54. Lord Castlereagh had divined for long the naval projects of France against Great Britain.

Gifted beyond any of his contemporaries, except the Duke of Wellington, with the prophetic eye of genius, and ever looking forward to the future rather than engrossed with the present, Lord Castlereagh had long anticipated the greatest danger to Great Britain from the *naval* forces of the enemy. While nearly all his contemporaries were reposing on the pleasing illusion that England was unassailable on that side, and that the Nile and Trafalgar had given her the undisputed command of

CHAP. III. 1809.

the seas, he measured with a steady eye the real naval resources of his opponent, and had early divined the secret designs of Buonaparte to form a great naval confederacy which should concentrate the whole maritime strength of the Continent against this country. To this purpose he clearly saw his conquests at land were mainly directed; and the extraordinary success with which they had been attended gave too much reason to fear that his hopes in this respect were not only likely to be realised, but rapidly approaching realisation. The practice which he had long carried out, whenever he got the command of a maritime country, of seizing the whole shipwrights, naval carpenters, and naval stores which it contained, and marching them off to the dockyards, joined to the terror of the famous Berlin and Milan decrees, left no room for doubt that it was against Great Britain that the whole forces of the Continent were to be hurled, and that this was to be done by a forced coalition of the entire maritime power of the Continent, and a naval crusade against these islands. And the knowledge which Government possessed of the secret articles of the treaty of Tilsit, left no room for doubt that preparations for carrying this great design into execution would immediately be commenced.

55. Lord Castlereagh's plan to defeat Napoleon's naval confederacy.

To meet this grand design of Napoleon, which he himself has since often told us was the great object of his life, Lord Castlereagh's plan of operations consisted of two parts. The first was, to take advantage of our *present* maritime superiority to effect such a blockade of the enemy's harbours as might inflict on him as much injury as his Continental blockade was likely to inflict on this country.* The second was, to make such use of the

* "The more I have had time to reflect on our future prospects in this war, the more impressed I am with a conviction that neither peace nor independence can be the lot of this nation, till we have found the means of making France feel that her new anti-social and anti-commercial system will not avail her against a power that can, for its own preservation, and consequently legitimately, counteract at sea what she lawlessly inflicts and enforces on shore. I

considerable military force at the disposal of this country as might, by transporting it from place to place by sea, compensate its inferiority upon the whole to the land troops of the enemy; and, by thus rendering it superior, at unexpected points, on sudden attacks, to any local force that could be opposed to it, effect the destruction of his principal naval establishments before his forces, toiling by land journeys, could concentrate in sufficient numbers successfully to resist. The Orders in Council were the result of the first; the great expeditions, which, for the first time in the war, signalised his war ministry, were the carrying out of the second. This new system, obviously founded in reason, but so much at variance with the plan of operations hitherto pursued that it passed at the time for Quixotic and impracticable, required no small amount of moral courage for its conception, and political influence for its execution. But Lord Castlereagh possessed both; and the success which had hitherto attended his plan was such as to justify the most sanguine hopes of the advantages which might result from its further and more extended adoption. For by the Copenhagen expedition he had completely paralysed the naval forces accumulating in the enemy's hands in the Baltic; and by alimenting the Peninsular war, he had withdrawn the whole fleets of Spain and Portugal from their grasp. Stripped of its two wings, the French *naval centre* alone presented a formidable object of attack; but circumstances had now occurred which warranted the opinion that it might be assailed with every prospect of success.

So early as the year 1797, a very able memorandum had been laid before the Cabinet by desire of Mr Pitt

wish you would turn in your mind, whether we are of necessity bound to postpone measures in furtherance of this great purpose, with reference to the American question; or whether, even upon the reservation of the late Government, the right of retaliation may not be exercised by us without prejudice to these discussions. . . . The detail of such an arrangement will require much consideration: the general principle is sufficiently obvious."—LORD CASTLEREAGH *to* MR PERCEVAL, *October* 1, 1807; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, viii. 87, 88.

CHAP. III.

1809.

56. Plan of the Walcheren expedition; vast importance of it.

and Mr Dundas, pointing out the expedience of finding employment for the enemy's force at home, and suggesting the island of WALCHEREN as a favourable point of attack.* The eagle eye and military genius of Lord Castlereagh made him at once seize the same idea which, since that time, had become recommended by a great variety of other considerations. Antwerp had now become the chief naval establishment of Napoleon—the great fortified harbour where the larger part of the armament destined for the invasion and subjugation of Great Britain was to be assembled. Cherbourg was to be the centre, and Brest the left; but the great bulk of the forces were to be collected in the Scheldt. It was there that the Prince of Parma, one of the ablest generals whom Europe ever saw, collected his naval and military forces for the invasion of England in the time of Queen Elizabeth. Napoleon, with his usual penetration, had long discerned its paramount importance. He had already constructed magnificent docks capable of holding forty sail of the line at Antwerp, and he projected still greater works on the opposite side of the Scheldt, where the

* "Practice and experience seem to unite with the actual circumstances of Britain and of its enemy, in pointing out that, as we can no longer divide the armies of France by Continental wars, we ought to attempt the destruction of the armaments in the havens where they are preparing for invasions, and thus oblige the French Directory either to find new plunder from their own subjects or from among their oppressed allies to support their armies, or to run the risk of those armies turning on the upstart rulers of their devoted country. . . .

"The island of Walcheren, in Zealand, recommends itself for the destination of a conjunct expedition, and the armament can be covered in its operations by the North Sea fleet. The situation of this island, with regard to the mouths of the Scheldt, is such that, in the event of obtaining it, we could completely command the navigation of that river, and render the possession of the other Zealand islands, and the countries bordering on them, of no value, because we could control the former Dutch and Austrian Netherlands. Flushing, situated on the southern extremity of the island, is the best naval port on the north coast of the Netherlands, and the place from which attempts to attack Britain could be best made, because it could send out large transports and men-of-war to protect flat-bottomed boats and the port also, which, in the hands of Britain, would dispose the Dutch, if restored to them, more than any other circumstance, to return to their former state, or to yield readily any of their foreign possessions in exchange for this key to their country."—*Memoir by* JOHN BRUCE, *framed by desire of* MR PITT, *December* 25, 1797; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, vi. 245, 246.

Tête de Flandre was situated. Five-and-thirty sail of the line were already finished, or building, there; materials for half as many more were ready in its arsenals; and the Emperor anticipated nothing less, as we know from himself, than to issue from the Scheldt at the head of fifty sail of the line. It was evident, therefore, that as Antwerp was the point from whence the decisive blow against Great Britain was to be directed, so it was there that the thrust was to be parried, and the counter stroke fatal to all his projects delivered. And no time could be figured so favourable for the execution of such a design as the present; for two hundred and fifty thousand of Napoleon's best troops were engaged in Spain, and every disposable man in France and Germany had been hurried to the Danube to make head against Austria, which had declared war, crossed the Inn on the 9th April, and commenced a most formidable contest on the Bavarian plains.[1]

[1] Mr Canning's speech, Parl. Deb. xvi. 338-347.

57. Reasons for preferring the Scheldt to the Peninsula.

Doubts at first passed through Lord Castlereagh's mind, whether a great expedition, if sent at all, should not be sent to Spain instead of the Scheldt; as there could be no doubt that if strongly reinforced Sir Arthur Wellesley would have driven the French from Madrid, and possibly expelled them from the Peninsula. But on fuller consideration there were several reasons which led him to conclude, and as the event proved wisely, that the former was the most advisable point of attack. In the first place, the entire deliverance of the Peninsula, and the chasing of the French across the Pyrenees, however important in themselves, could not have effected the overthrow of Napoleon's power. There was no likelihood that France could be conquered from the side of Spain, how material soever success there might be as a diversion; it was from the Rhine alone that the mighty deliverance could be looked for, and nothing was so likely to lead to this result as a successful expedition against Antwerp, which, by determining the irresolution of Prussia, might bring the whole strength of Germany into the

CHAP. III. 1809.

field. In the second place, the direction of our forces to the Scheldt was recommended by this most important consideration, that if it proved successful it would inflict an irreparable wound on the *naval* strength of the enemy. Thenceforward, England might view with a smile the flotilla at Boulogne, and the threats of invasion; the Channel would prove an impassable barrier during the whole remainder of the war, and the contest, so far as she was concerned, be at once determined in her favour. In the third place, experience had now proved that the state of discipline in the Spanish armies was so defective, and the means of providing any large army with provision so inconsiderable, that nothing could be more hazardous than to attempt operations in the interior of Spain with a powerful British force; and as the Spanish forces were incapable of acting with regular troops, any combined operation would probably be attended with disaster. The result of the Talavera campaign afforded decisive evidence that these apprehensions were too well founded; and we have the authority of Wellington for the assertion, that if the whole Walcheren expedition had been sent to him he could have got no further than he did, nor even so far, from the utter impossibility of feeding a larger body of men than he had under his command in the interior of Spain.*

* "Before I quit this part of the subject, it may be satisfactory to you to know that I don't think matters would have been much better if you had sent your large expedition to Spain instead of the Scheldt. You could not have equipped it in Galicia, or anywhere in the north of Spain. If we had had 60,000 instead of 20,000, in all probability we should not have got to Talavera to fight the battle, for want of means and of provisions. But if we had got to Talavera we could not have gone further, and the armies would probably have separated for want of means of subsistence, probably without a battle, but certainly afterwards. Besides, you will observe that your 40,000 men, supposing them to be equipped and means to exist of feeding them, would not compensate for the deficiency of numbers, of composition, and of efficiency, in the Spanish armies; and that, supposing they had been able to remove the French from Madrid, they would not have removed them from the Peninsula, even in the existing state of the French force. . . .

"Much of this deficiency of numbers, composition, discipline, and efficiency, is to be attributed to the existing Government in Spain. They have attempted to govern the kingdom in a state of revolution by an adherence to old rules

Strongly impressed with the importance of an attack upon this great maritime arsenal of the enemy, Lord Castlereagh no sooner came into office, in April 1807, than he prepared and laid before the Cabinet a detailed memorandum on a Walcheren expedition, which he regarded as at once the means of depriving the enemy of the right arm of his naval strength, and as an incentive to the north of Germany and Holland to take up arms and join Prussia, then bravely combating with France after the battle of Eylau. This memorandum, which is very minute and detailed, shows how early he had descried the vulnerable quarter of Napoleon's power, and the accurate information he had obtained regarding it.* The battle of Friedland, however, and treaty of Tilsit, necessarily adjourned the execution of the design; but no sooner had the war in the Peninsula broken out, and absorbed a large part of the military force of the enemy, than he again laid a still more urgent memorandum before the Cabinet, giving minute plans for the conduct of the expedition, and points to be attacked, and strongly urged that the preparations should be pushed forward with the utmost activity, and he suggested Sir John Moore for the command.† After the death of that lamented officer,

58. Lord Castlereagh's early Cabinet Memorandum regarding a Walcheren expedition in 1807 and 1808.

Oct. 10, 1808.

and systems, and with the aid of what is called enthusiasm. . . . People are very apt to believe that enthusiasm carried the French through the Revolution, and was the parent of those exertions which have nearly conquered the world: but if the subject is nicely examined, it will be found that enthusiasm was the name only, but that force was the instrument, under the system of terror, which brought forward those great resources which first stopped the allies; and that a perseverance in the same system of applying by force every individual, and every description of property in the country, to the service of the army, has since conquered Europe. After this statement, you will judge for yourselves whether you will employ any, and what strength of army in the support of the cause of Spain. Circumstances with which you are acquainted have obliged me to separate myself from the Spanish army; and I can only tell you, that I feel no inclination to join in co-operation with them again on my own responsibility, and that I shall see my way very clearly before me indeed before I do so; and I do not recommend you to have anything to do with them in their present state."—LORD WELLINGTON *to* LORD CASTLEREAGH, *Merida, August* 25, 1809; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, vii. 112, 113.

* See *Castlereagh Correspondence*, vi. 247-250.

† "Upon the whole, it seems necessary that the line of operations to be

CHAP. III. 1809.

and the return of the troops from Corunna, he was not discouraged, but again urged upon the Cabinet an expedition on a great scale against Walcheren and Antwerp, accompanied by the most minute particulars as to the transport, and other details connected with the project. This memorandum, which is given at full length in the *Castlereagh Correspondence*, is very minute, specifying the exact number of transports which would be required, and the amount of tonnage of each vessel.* It would have been well if the Government had been equally impressed as Lord Castlereagh was with the value of time in war, and the inestimable importance of combining the operations of allied forces so as to produce a *simultaneous* impression on many different quarters. His plans were all laid for this object; and if the Cabinet could have been prevailed upon to have gone into them at once, the war would in all probability have been brought to a glorious termination in that campaign. The Austrians crossed the Inn and entered Bavaria on the 9th April; on the 22d the battle of Echmühl was fought; and on the 22d May Napoleon was defeated, and reduced to the last extremity, at Aspern, at the very time when Soult was flying in disorder from Oporto. Everything, therefore, recommended the adoption of immediate and vigorous operations on a great scale: the prize was immense, the danger less than at any former period, and there was every reason to hope that a powerful demonstration on the Scheldt, in addition to the destruction of the enemy's naval armaments there, would at once determine the irre-

April 1, 1809.

adopted, after a landing is effected, against the three fortified posts [of Flushing, Rammekens, and Campveere] should be examined and reported on, by Sir John Moore and the officer who is to command the artillery, in case the service is ordered to be undertaken. All the requisite preparations should be prosecuted with the utmost activity in the interim, as if the attack was absolutely resolved on."—*Memorandum for the Cabinet; Castlereagh Correspondence*, vi. 253.

* LORD CASTLEREAGH'S *Memorandum, April* 1, 1809; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, vi. 254. It was stated in this memorandum that Government had 226,000 tons of transports at their command.

solution of Prussia, and raise a flame which would bring the whole military strength of Northern Germany to bear upon Napoleon, already reduced to the greatest straits in the island of Lobau in the Danube.

59. The Cabinet hesitates, and requires the opinion of military men on the subject.

Instead of this, the Cabinet did what a council of war almost always does in similar circumstances—it declined to fight. Struck with the magnitude of the force proposed by Lord Castlereagh to be employed upon the service—which amounted to 30,000 infantry, 6000 cavalry, 2000 artillery, and 30 ships of the line, being nearly the whole disposable force of the empire, when Sir Arthur Wellesley had 20,000 in Portugal—they paused, and required the opinions of men of military experience on the practicability of the operation, before they would venture upon sanctioning it. The opinions accordingly were taken, in pursuance of a circular sent round by the Commander-in-Chief, and, as might have been expected, were extremely various; the majority, however, and nearly all the *old officers*, represented it as an undertaking attended with great hazard, and against the chances of success in which were to be set, in the event of failure, the probable, if not certain, destruction of the whole disposable force of the empire.[1] Sir Home Popham strongly and energetically urged the vast importance of the expedition, the great risk of delay, and the inevitable hazard with which it would be attended if postponed until the autumnal months.* Unfortunately, at this very time, when the united operation of talent and experience was beyond any other time required in the military administration of the country, the Duke of York was obliged

[1] Castlereagh Corresp. vi. 266-274.

May 16.

* "I again venture to press on your Lordship how important it is to save even an hour, and to seize the favourable moment which is presented to us for accomplishing an undertaking not inferior in national importance to any on which the resources of this empire have ever been employed. . . . You will, I am sure, excuse the anxiety I express upon the present occasion. I see the season advancing fast; and if we are imperceptibly led on till the midsummer fine weather is past, we shall have the most dreadful of all difficulties, the elements, to encounter."—SIR HOME POPHAM *to* LORD CASTLEREAGH, *June* 13, 1809; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, vi. 274.

CHAP. III. 1809.

to resign his situation as Commander-in-Chief, in consequence of the outcry raised against him from the disclosures made as to the participation of his artful mistress, Mrs Mary Ann Clarke, in the disposal of commissions at the Horse Guards. His Royal Highness was succeeded by Sir D. Dundas, a respectable veteran, but past the period of active exertion, such as the extremity of the crisis imperatively required. What was still more unfortunate, Lord Castlereagh was constrained, by the weight of the highest influence, to offer the command to the Earl of Chatham, the Master-General of the Ordnance, whose services in that department led the Sovereign to suppose that the son of the great earl, Mr Pitt's brother, would signalise his command by exploits worthy of the long-established fame of his house.

60. Great delay of the Cabinet in making up their mind on the subject.

So much time was lost by the Cabinet in making up their mind, and taking the opinion of military officers on the proposed expedition, that it was not till the 14th June that it was finally resolved on, and Lord Chatham suggested to his Majesty for the command; and even then the Cabinet hesitated, without further investigation, to go into the proposal which Lord Castlereagh had so anxiously urged upon them in the first week of April preceding.* This delay was the more reprehensible on their part, as both the military and naval armaments could have been got ready by the 10th of June, and as they had been informed that the whole

* "Lord Castlereagh begs leave to acquaint your Majesty that your Majesty's confidential servants, having considered the information which has been collected relative to an operation against the enemy's naval resources in the Scheldt, are humbly of opinion that, by employing an adequate force of not less than 35,000 men, the attempt may be made with every prospect of success, provided the practicability of a landing at Sandfleet can be assured. Till this point can be further investigated, they are desirous to postpone receiving your Majesty's final commands upon the measure, requesting, in the mean time, your Majesty's permission to proceed, with as much *secrecy* and *expedition* as possible, with all the preliminary arrangements, which, when completed, will contribute to render the troops equally applicable to any other service."—LORD CASTLEREAGH *to the* KING, *June* 14, 1809; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, vi 275, 276.

maritime preparations would certainly be complete by that time, so far back as the 16th May preceding.[1] The battle of Wagram was not fought till the 6th July, so that if the expedition had sailed on the 16th June, the period assigned by the Admiralty, it would have been in ample time to affect the war on the Danube. Lord Castlereagh, who, endowed by nature with real military genius, was perfectly aware of the value of time in war, was in despair at this disastrous delay; but all his efforts to terminate the procrastination of the Cabinet were for long unavailing; and it was not till the 19th June that orders were given to the ordnance department to get the artillery and siege equipage ready, nor till the 28th July, three weeks after the battle of Wagram had been fought, that the expedition set sail. This long delay was, of course, fatal to one great object of the expedition, which was to rouse Prussia and Northern Germany into action; and it would be inexplicable, did not subsequent events reveal the existence of an intrigue in the Cabinet at this time to overturn Lord Castlereagh, which will be immediately detailed. The intensity of feeling excited by this intrigue rendered the Ministry alike blind to the great design of the Minister at War, and insensible to the value of time in carrying it into execution.

[1] Castlereagh Corresp. vi. 276.

July 28.

Although, however, the long hesitation of the Cabinet in finally determining on the expedition was fatal to it as a diversion to Austria, and a means of resuscitating the war in Germany; yet, considered in reference to the separate interests of Great Britain, and as likely to lead to the destruction of the enemy's naval forces in the Scheldt, the delay could hardly be considered as an object of regret. Such were the necessities of Napoleon's situation at that time, after he had been brought to the brink of ruin by the result of the battle of Aspern, that, so far from having been able in this interval to make any efficient preparations for the defence of Antwerp, he had

61. Immense force employed at last on the expedition. July 28.

CHAP. III. 1809.

been under the necessity of drawing off every disposable sabre and bayonet from the Low Countries to support himself on the banks of the Danube. In the meanwhile, the forces of Great Britain, both by sea and land, seemed to augment in an almost miraculous manner, and were accumulated at the decisive point by the officers of both services in the most able way. The armament, when it did at last set sail, was the most formidable in point of numbers, equipment, and efficiency, both by sea and land, which ever was conveyed across the ocean from the beginning of time, and, beyond all doubt, fully adequate to the success of the undertaking. The naval forces consisted of 35 sail of the line, 2 of 50 guns, 21 frigates, 33 sloops, and 82 gunboats—an armament considerably greater than that which conquered at Trafalgar. The land forces amounted to 39,143 men, of whom 3032 were artillery, and 2657 cavalry, with 150 mortars and heavy guns; the infantry, including 2867 foot guards, being 33,000.[1]

[1] Castlereagh Corresp. viii. 209, 210.

62. French forces there, and defenceless state of Antwerp.

To resist this formidable armament, the forces at Antwerp, and in the fortifications defending the approach to it, were of the most contemptible description when the fleet first appeared on the coast of Zealand. In truth, Napoleon, entirely engrossed with the war on the Danube and in the Peninsula, both of which were daily assuming more colossal proportions, was by no means aware of the danger which his naval establishments in the Scheldt were running, and he trusted to the timidity of the English in land operations, for that security which he could no longer hope to insure by his own exertions. Antwerp, in particular, was in the most defenceless state; not one-half of the bastions were armed; the ditch, in most places dry, was in some filled up; two old breaches had never been repaired; the garrison consisted only of 2500 men—a force wholly inadequate to man the works—even of this small body, only one-half were regular soldiers. Such had been the demand of the

Emperor for sabres and bayonets on the Danube and in Spain, that the Minister at War had no troops that he could send to the Scheldt. In truth, no one contemplated an attack in that quarter; and although they had received some vague accounts of armaments in the British harbours, they took it for granted they were intended to recruit the army in Spain, and never for a moment contemplated an attack upon the territory of the great nation. The island of Walcheren was not in quite so defenceless a state as Antwerp; but it was in no condition to stand against such a formidable army as was now about to be directed against it. Flushing, its principal fortification, was slenderly fortified, except on the side of the sea, where it was very strong, and garrisoned only by 3000 men, composed of Prussian deserters, colonial troops, and a battalion of Irish.[1]

[1] Thiers, Con. et l'Empire, xi. 201, 202.

63. Lord Castlereagh's instructions to Lord Chatham for the conduct of the expedition.

Aware of the defenceless state of the fortifications of the Scheldt, and of the importance of striking the contemplated blow with the greatest possible expedition, Lord Castlereagh's instructions to Lord Chatham were to advance with the utmost rapidity, and direct his forces against the decisive point of Antwerp without a moment's delay.* He concluded with the emphatic de-

* "My Lord,—The importance of checking the naval power which the enemy is so rapidly accumulating in the Scheldt, and of making a powerful diversion in favour of the Austrian arms at the present moment, has determined his Majesty to direct the efforts of his naval and military forces to that quarter. Your Lordship will consider the operation in question as, in its execution, more immediately directed against the fleet and arsenals of France in the Scheldt. The complete success of the operation would include the capture or destruction of the whole of the enemy's ships either building at Antwerp or afloat in the Scheldt, the entire destruction of their yards and arsenals at Antwerp, Terneuse, and Flushing, and the rendering, if possible, the Scheldt no longer navigable for ships of war.

"As the accomplishment of these important objects, in their fullest extent, must in a great measure depend upon the rapidity with which the enterprise is carried into execution, it has been deemed advisable to appropriate such an amount of force to this service as may enable you, at the same time that you occupy Walcheren and South Beveland, to advance at once a considerable corps against Antwerp, which may be reinforced so soon as Flushing is invested, if not actually reduced. As the attainment of the entire of the objects which his Majesty has in view may ultimately be disappointed, should the enemy have the means of assembling in such strength upon Antwerp as to render

CHAP. III. 1809.

claration that the expedition, in the first instance at least, was to be regarded as a *coup-de-main*, in which everything would depend on celerity of movement; and that the retaining or retiring from the advanced position of Antwerp, when gained, would be matter for future consideration and instructions. With how much wisdom these instructions were framed, and how admirably calculated they were, if they had been literally complied with, to have secured, with very little loss, the whole objects of the expedition, will be abundantly proved in the sequel, and is confirmed by no less an authority than that of Napoleon himself. Unfortunately, the same views were by no means shared by all the members of the Cabinet; and the Board of Admiralty, with the caution characteristic of boards and old men, insisted that Walcheren should be taken before the expedition moved further.*

perseverance on your Lordship's part inconsistent with the security of your army, your Lordship will, in that case, use your utmost endeavours, in concert with the navy, to secure as many of the objects above pointed out as the circumstances of the moment will permit; and, as the possession of the island of Walcheren and the port of Flushing may, in themselves, under certain contingencies, be acquisitions of the utmost consequence in the further prosecution of the war, I am to signify to your Lordship the King's commands that, in the event of your being obliged to retire from the more advanced positions on the Scheldt, you do maintain the island of Walcheren till his Majesty's further pleasure is signified. . . .

"The state of the campaign on the Continent does not, at the present moment, permit his Majesty's Government to contemplate the possibility of commencing operations with a British army from a point so much in advance towards the frontier of France as Antwerp; neither is there any allied force as yet in the field in the north of Germany of sufficient magnitude, with whom an advance from thence could be combined; nor has it been deemed consistent with the celerity of movement, on which the success of the intended attack may depend, to send the army equipped upon a scale which would qualify it to enter immediately upon a campaign. The expedition must therefore be considered as not, in the first instance, assuming any other character than that of a *coup-de-main*. While the operation is in progress, other prospects may open themselves, and events occur, which may induce his Majesty's Government to extend their views."—LORD CASTLEREAGH'S *Instructions to* LORD CHATHAM, *July* 1809; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, vi. 290-292.

* "It is the opinion of the sea Lords of the Admiralty that, in the first instance, the island of Walcheren should be taken. They do not take upon them to say where the landing should be made, or how the military force should be distributed: this should be arranged between the General and Sir Richard Strachan."—*Admiralty Minute, June* 9; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, vi. 279.

There could be no doubt that it was necessary to occupy the island of Walcheren generally, in the first instance, in order to secure the passage of the troops in the channels leading to the Scheldt on either side; but there was not the slightest occasion to take Flushing before proceeding further, as the troops could get up, and, in point of fact, did so, when it was still in the hands of the enemy. It was the unfortunate determination of the naval and military officers employed to reduce Flushing *before* proceeding further, instead of, as Lord Castlereagh had directed, *doing both at once*, for which there were ample forces, which was the sole cause of the ultimate miscarriage of a descent devised with so much wisdom and ability, and for the successful termination of which such ample forces, both by sea and land, had been put at the disposal of the officers commanding.

64. The troops at length embark, and reach the coast of Holland. July 29.

Devoured with anxiety to expedite operations in a matter where so much depended on not incurring a moment's delay, Lord Castlereagh strongly urged, on 21st June, that the embarkation of the troops should commence forthwith,* in which case the expedition might have been afloat at latest on the 5th July. But he found it impossible to push on the different services at a pace corresponding to his own clear and fervent impressions, and the expedition did not begin to embark for a month after, and reached the coast of Walcheren only on the 29th July. The fleet, entering the East Scheldt, moored at the entry of the Weere Gat, and landed 15,000 men in a few hours, who easily put to flight 2000 of the gar- July 30.

* "Lord Castlereagh would humbly propose to your Majesty that the regiments most remote from the points of embarkation should be immediately put in motion. It is intended to embark at Portsmouth in the ships of the line about 17,000 men, a proportion of which force, in order to mark the operation as destined to the westward, will be moved from the eastern district; and as the troops from Essex will require fourteen days for their march and embarkation, it is presumed that the embarkation and equipment of the whole force, including ordnance stores, &c., may be completed within that period, counting from Monday next." — LORD CASTLEREAGH *to the* KING, *June* 21, 1809; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, vi. 281.

CHAP. III. 1809.

rison of Flushing, sent under General Osten to oppose them, and soon got possession of the whole island except the fortresses of Middleburg and Flushing, which were invested, and the former of which immediately surrendered. At the same time, Lord Huntly, with 7000 men, appeared off the island of Cadsand, lying to the south of the southern branch of the Scheldt, so that, if they had gained it, the British at the very outset would have became masters of both mouths of the Scheldt. Unfortunately the commander, descrying a force on the beach, which, though only 1500 men, looked stronger than it really was, did not venture to hazard a landing. This was much to be regretted; for it is now known that if the whole 7000 had landed and been reinforced by the troops in the east channel, which were entirely disposable, they could have made themselves masters of the whole batteries on the southern bank of the Scheldt, and arrived without resistance at the Tête du Flandre, directly opposite to Antwerp.[1]

[1] Thiers, xi. 206.

65. First successes.

As it was, the expedition met in the outset with great success, and, beyond all doubt, had the means of achieving the whole objects for which it was destined with very little resistance. Batz is an important fort at the extremity of South Beveland, where the two branches of the Scheldt unite, and within thirty miles of Antwerp. North and South Beveland were inundated with troops under General Ross, and 25,000 men could in a day have been concentrated to advance from these islands to that fortress. The position of the French fleet in the Western Scheldt off Flushing was now very perilous; for the British naval force in its front was greatly superior to it, so that it could not remain in its present position; and, on the other hand, the guns of the fort at Batz, which might at any moment fall into the hands of the invaders, commanded the passage up the western branch of the river into the central stream. In these circumstances, which seemed all but desperate, it was rescued

from immediate danger by the vigour and capacity of its commander, Admiral Missiessy, who, before the British were aware of what he was intending, succeeded in getting his ships through the perilous strait, and above Fort Lillo, which was of such strength as to defy any attack by a merely naval force. But the danger was only adjourned, not removed. Two days after, Hope, with his division, 7000 strong, appeared before Batz, which was evacuated by its garrison during the night; while the English ships succeeded in ascending both branches of the river to the same point. Antwerp, with the whole fleet and arsenals, was in the most imminent danger. "Had the whole British army," says Thiers, "followed Hope's division, by the way of South and North Beveland, they would have been in a few days before Antwerp, which was fortified indeed, but only by old fortifications half fallen down, garrisoned barely by 2000 men, without a gun on the ramparts, and the authorities were panic-struck by the unexpected appearance of the enemy." All the French authorities concur in this: Antwerp, with its magnificent fleet and arsenal, was at the mercy of the British. Complete success was within their grasp, and might have been attained in three days.[1]*

July 31.

Aug. 2.

[1] Thiers, xi. 207-210; Lord Castlereagh to Lord Chatham, Aug. 8, 1809; Castlereagh Corresp. vi. 301.

At this decisive moment Lord Chatham, who, though a man of capacity and information, was advanced in years,

* "General Pigot, who is my brother-in-law, commands at Litchfield; by such means I got a long interview with General Monnet at Litchfield last December. He told me in plain terms what the real situation of Flushing and Walcheren was; that if the British troops had immediately attacked Antwerp, they must have succeeded in taking that place, and in the destruction of the French fleet. They sent him, he said, to Flushing 3000 men from Antwerp, of such troops as they had, the same as his garrison was composed of, men of all nations, who would not obey his orders, and who had fired on him and his officers. He told me that the men of the city of Antwerp and all the neighbourhood, they collected from report, might have amounted to 35,000 men; that was the most: few if any of them had seen service, and they had no officers to command them. He said Lord Chatham had been led by his spies into error as to their discipline, number, and strength; for he might, at any time from the appearance of our fleet on the coast to the hour of his departure from Flushing, have taken Antwerp."—HENRY VERNON, ESQ., *to* LORD CASTLEREAGH, *February* 1, 1810; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, vi. 328.

CHAP. III.

1809.

66. Ruinous halt of the British army to besiege Flushing, which is taken.

of indolent habits, and imbued with the ideas of the old methodical school in war, deemed it indispensable to reduce Flushing before proceeding farther. He thought it was essential to the safety of the expedition that he should secure this important fortress and harbour as a base for future operations, and a covering point for embarkation in case of disaster. These were in truth important objects of the campaign had it been likely to last for any considerable period; but, heading as he did an expedition intended for a *coup-de-main*, it was wholly unnecessary to waste time on any such point, and security was much more likely to be gained by a rapid advance, and the immediate attainment of all the objects of the expedition. So it was, however, that the resolution was taken and immediately acted upon; Lord Castlereagh's instructions to push on with the utmost celerity to Antwerp were disregarded; the troops were retained inactive in North and South Beveland and Walcheren, and the siege of Flushing was undertaken in form. Success was easily obtained there; ground was broken before
Aug. 5. the fortress on the 5th August, after some inconsiderable
Aug. 11. actions. On the 11th, the frigates of the fleet passed the batteries of Flushing, exchanging a warm cannon-
Aug. 12. ade with the guns on shore; on the day following, Sir Richard Strachan, at the head of ten sail of the line,
Aug. 13. passed also; and on the 13th, a tremendous cannonade and bombardment were commenced from the ships and frigates, and sixty heavy guns and mortars, with which the land batteries were armed. The fire was kept up on the following day with uncommon vigour, in the course of which great part of the garrison was killed or wounded, and the town was set on fire in several places. On the 16th, General Monnet capitulated, with 5800 men who still remained of the garrison, which had been reinforced by 3000 additional men from Antwerp. So far, all was prosperous;[1] but General Rousseau, by preventing the debarkation of the troops in the island of Cadsand, and

[1] Thiers, xi. 220-236; Chatham's Desp.; Ann. Reg. 1809, 490-493.

General Monnet, by detaining them fourteen days before Flushing, had ruined the principal objects of the expedition.

67. Steps and letters of Napoleon on hearing of the expedition.

Great was the consternation in the Government at Paris when the telegraph announced the descent of 40,000 men at the mouth of the Scheldt; "and then," says Thiers, "was seen in a striking manner the dangers of a policy which, when 300,000 men were in Spain, 100,000 in Italy, and 300,000 in Germany, had not a soldier left to protect Antwerp, Lille, or Paris."[1] In the first moments of alarm, the only thing they could think of was to call out the National Guard in the maritime provinces of the Low Countries, and to appoint Bernadotte to the command at Antwerp. But they were extremely apprehensive of incurring the Emperor's displeasure in these steps, as he was known to be extremely reluctant to make any appeal to popular feeling, and Bernadotte was personally obnoxious to him. The consequence was that they did for some time nothing efficient one way or other, except urging the King of Holland to assume the command at Antwerp, and throwing the gendarmes and customhouse officers of the neighbourhood into the place. If Lord Chatham had been aware how matters stood, he might with ease have taken it, even after the long and unwise delay incurred in the reduction of Flushing. As it was, the imperial wrath exhaled in several angry letters to the War Minister and the members of the Government at Paris, blaming them for not calling out the National Guard and appointing Bernadotte to the command. In these letters the greatness of his apprehensions and the anger he displayed revealed in the clearest manner the importance of the blow which had been struck, and the important results, fatal to all his projects against England, with which, if it had been executed with the same ability with which it had been conceived, it would have been attended.[2] One very curious letter, characteristic of his deep-rooted

[1] Thiers, xi. 221.

[2] Thiers, xi. 450, 456, 457, 465, 466.

CHAP. III. 1809.

distrust of volunteers or half-disciplined forces, deserves a place in the text. "Do not attempt to come to blows with the English. '*A man is not a soldier.*' Your national guards, your conscripts, organised in provisional demi-brigades, huddled pell-mell into Antwerp, for the most part without officers, with an artillery half-formed, opposed to the bands of Moore, who have been engaged with the troops of our old army, will infallibly be beaten, and will furnish the English with a matter of boast which will escape them if they do not make themselves masters of our fleet, which I hope they have not done, or of Antwerp, which I am sure they will not be able to do. We must oppose to the English nothing but the fever, which will soon devour them all, and soldiers protected by embankments and inundations while they are receiving instruction and organising themselves. In a month, the English will be obliged to take to their ships covered with confusion, decimated by the fever, and I shall have gained by their expedition an army of 80,000 men, which will render me essential service if the war should continue in Austria."[1]

[1] Napoleon au Ministre da la Guerre, Aug. 10, 1809; Thiers, xi. 225, 226.

68. Napoleon's plan of defence of the Scheldt.

In conformity with these principles, Napoleon's orders to General Monnet were to defend Flushing to the last extremity, for the double purpose of confining the English in Walcheren during the unhealthy season, and gaining time for preparing the defence of Antwerp. He enjoined him not to lose a moment in cutting the dykes and laying the whole island under water. He ordered the fleet at the same time to be withdrawn entirely to Antwerp, and even above it, if necessary; to spread the inundations on shore wherever it was required, but to take care not to sink hulks in the narrow places, as he had no intention of blocking up the navigation of the Scheldt in the attempt to defend it. He ordered Bernadotte, whom he appointed to the command at Antwerp, to collect the provisional demi-brigades and gendarmerie, and the Dutch troops of the King of Holland, whose

united force he estimated at 25,000 men; and to take up a position around Antwerp in situations as much as possible covered by redoubts and inundations; but carefully to avoid a battle, leaving it to the fever to dispose of the English. Behind this, he directed the formation of a second army, composed entirely of national guards, arranged in five divisions, commanded by as many military senators, who were to watch the left bank of the Scheldt from the Tête du Flandre, a suburb of Antwerp, to the western extremity of the island of Cadsand. This second army was to be furnished with eighty guns drawn from the fortresses in Flanders, and worked by ten companies of artillery sent from France, and was to be under the orders of Marshal Bessières. Well knowing that armies never produce of effective men one-half of what is demanded and expected, Napoleon, in addition to these, directed the formation of a third army on the Meuse, composed of conscripts hurried from every part of the nation, and all the convalescents who could be drawn from the hospitals on the Rhine, in Germany, and in the interior of France. The better to impose upon France and Europe, always an essential point in the Emperor's policy, he directed the army collected on the right bank of the river to be called the "army of Antwerp," that on the left, the army of the "Tête du Flandre," and the third, the "army of reserve." He ordered, at the same time, an article to be inserted in the *Moniteur*, detailing in the minutest manner the measures of defence adopted, the magnitude of the force in process of formation, which was estimated at 80,000 men, and the certain approaching discomfiture of the insane islanders who had hazarded themselves on the territory of the great nation only to incur certain humiliation and defeat.[1]

[1] Napoleon au Ministre de la Guerre, Août 22, 1809; Thiers, xi. 465.

Under these magniloquent declarations was concealed the real terror of the Emperor, which the magnitude of his defensive preparations, simultaneously ordered, too clearly revealed. They decidedly proved the importance

CHAP. III.

1809.

of the blow struck by Lord Castlereagh and the wisdom of the direction given to it. The troops ordered by the Emperor for the defence of Antwerp existed, at the time when he gave his orders, in a great measure only in his fruitful and sanguine imagination; and if the instructions given to Lord Chatham had been duly executed, that fortress would have been taken and the fleet destroyed before 5000 men could have been collected for its defence. Had he contented himself with merely observing Flushing with 10,000 men, after the fort of Batz, only thirty miles from Antwerp, was taken, in the beginning of August, and advanced with 30,000 either by the island of Cadsand and the left bank of the river, or the fort of Lillo and the right bank, the fortress and the whole fleet must infallibly have been taken, almost without resistance. The French military writers are unanimous on this point. Even after Flushing was taken, on the 16th August, although the difficulty of the enterprise was much augmented, if a rapid advance with a concentrated force of 30,000 men had been made, Antwerp must have fallen, and the whole objects of the expedition have been attained. In five days after that event, on the 22d August, they might have been before the gates of Antwerp with their whole forces and guns, *the very day* on which Napoleon's orders for the formation of the armies for its defence *were dated from Schönbrunn, near Vienna.* At this time there were scarcely any guns mounted on the ramparts of Antwerp; and not 15,000 effective men, and these mostly of the most wretched description, were collected, with only twenty-four guns ill-harnessed, for its defence.[1] Could they have withstood a larger British force than fought at Waterloo? If ever a glorious victory and decisive success were within the grasp of the British army, it was on this occasion; and Waterloo itself did not confer a more decisive advantage than that with which it would have been attended.

69. Ease with which Antwerp might have been taken at first, and even after the fall of Flushing.

[1] Thiers, xi. 238, 239; Pelet, iv. 319; Jom. iii. 299.

Instead of stretching out their hands to seize the

trophy thus presented to their grasp, the British commanders, after the fall of Flushing, lost much precious time in a violent altercation which got up between the military and naval commanders, as to whether the bulk of the army, with the artillery and baggage, should be transported by sea or land to the fort of Batz, of which General Hope was master. After a long debate, Lord Chatham decided on moving them by water, instead of traversing North and South Beveland on foot, as Hope's division had done; and the difficult operation was successfully accomplished, chiefly in frigates and vessels of light draught, by the skill and energy of Sir Richard Strachan and the officers and sailors under his command. But the extraordinary difficulty of transporting a fleet consisting of between two and three hundred sail by the two branches of the Scheldt through an intricate and difficult navigation, was such that it was not till the 25th August that the whole armament was collected at Batz. By this time the period of easy if not possible success had passed. The forces of the enemy were daily increasing by the successive arrival of national guards at Antwerp, and the completion of the formidable obstructions to prevent the ascent of the Scheldt, which Admiral Missiessy had formed in its bed. Their number was much exaggerated by false reports studiously furnished to Lord Chatham's spies by the counter-spies of the enemy. On the other hand, the effective forces of the British were seriously diminished since they had landed in Walcheren. As Napoleon had predicted, the fever of the country had proved the best ally of the French, and far more formidable than the sword of the enemy. Fifteen thousand men were already in hospital at Flushing and Middleburg, the victims of the dreadful fever which never fails in the autumnal months to desolate those low and marshy flats, and the effect of which was much aggravated by the long inactivity of the troops in unhealthy situations during the siege of Flushing. Not more than

70. Arrival of the British at Batz, and abandonment of the advance.

CHAP. III. 1809.

24,000 effectives remained out of upwards of 40,000 who had landed, and some of them required to be left behind to guard the communications. Possibly a Wellington, a Marlborough, or a Clyde, would, even with this diminished force, have pushed on and accomplished the whole objects of the expedition; but the enterprise would have been difficult and attended with hazard. What would have been easy with a fresh army on the 25th July, had become a very different matter with a weakened and sickly army and a greatly increased enemy on the 25th August. So Lord Chatham and a council of war, held at Batz on the 27th, decided. It was there determined—and, in the circumstances, probably wisely—that any farther advance had now become impossible, and that nothing remained to be done but to withdraw the troops to the island of Walcheren, which it was resolved to retain till further orders were received from Government.

[1] Lord Chatham's Desp., Aug. 26, 1809; Parl. Deb.

71. Rejoicings at Antwerp, and vainglorious boasting of Bernadotte. Aug. 28.

Great were the rejoicings at Antwerp when the retrograde movement of the British was ascertained. Passing from the extreme of terror to that of exultation, they gave way to the most extravagant rejoicings for the ignominious retreat of the presumptuous invader from their shores. In reality, the troops there had had scarce any share in the triumph, which was due entirely to the firmness of others on the one side, and the spread of disease on the other; but, like many other men, having done the least, they boasted the most. Bernadotte, in whom extravagant vanity was mingled with brilliant abilities, was the first to set the example of this self-laudation. "The success," says Thiers, "was in reality due exclusively to the firmness of General Rousseau, who prevented the disembarkation in the island of Cadsand on the 1st August; the resistance of General Monnet, who caused the invaders to lose a precious interval of time in the reduction of Flushing; in fine, the sangfroid of Admiral Missiessy, who saved the

fleet by his skilful manœuvres. Nevertheless, Marshal Bernadotte, ever ready to sound his own applauses, addressed a new order of the day to his troops, to congratulate them on the victory they had gained over the English—an order of the day which met with no better reception from the Emperor at Schönbrunn than that which he had addressed to the Saxons after the battle of Wagram."[1] * CHAP. III. 1809.

[1] Thiers, xi. 244-246.

72. Rapid and fatal progress of the Walcheren fever, which compels the evacuation of the island.

The English Government for a short time thought of retaining possession of the island of Walcheren, which, being defensible by ships, might, it was believed, resist all the attacks of the enemy; and its situation, hermetically closing the Scheldt, promised to neutralise all the advantages which Napoleon expected to derive from his armaments in the upper part of that river. Possibly the thing might have done, had it not been for the unhealthiness of the climate; and, if so, it would have proved an infinite source of annoyance to the French Emperor, who could ill brook part of the territory of the great nation remaining in the hands of an enemy. But the extreme sickness of the troops, much exceeding anything which had been anticipated, ere long rendered its retention impossible. The pestilential gales of autumn, in that low and marshy swamp, soon thinned the ranks more rapidly than the sword of the enemy could have done. The disease most prevalent—which was ascribed by the medical officers to the badness of the water, the dampness of their lodgings, immoderate consumption of unripe fruit, habits of intoxication, and exposure to night air—assumed the form of a typhoid fever, which spread with alarming rapidity. Sixteen thousand were ere long in hospital, and all who were seized with the malady were lost to the expedition; for it was a peculiarity of the complaint, as of most others of an aguish character, that the patient never recovered as long as he remained in

* In which all that his corps of Saxons did, was to run away on the evening of the first day of the battle.

CHAP. III. 1809.

the same atmosphere, and that removal to Britain was indispensable to convalescence. Even with that the progress of amendment was in general distressingly slow, and great numbers, even of such as survived, bore the malady about them for years, and could be distinguished in the ranks by their wan visages and emaciated figures. In these circumstances it was evident that if they remained much longer in the island the whole armament would perish or be disabled; and the British Cabinet, on 2d September, unanimously and wisely adopted the opinion of the Council of War that it should be abandoned, and the whole expedition, naval and military, return home. This was accordingly done; and the greatest armament which ever sailed from the European shores left the scenes of their early triumphs, baffled, discomfited, and covered with confusion.[1]

Sept. 2.

[1] Renny's Report on Walcheren fever, March 3, 1810; Castlereagh Corresp. vi. 337-341; Thiers, xi. 243, 244.

73. Cause of the failure of the expedition.

The expedition, which terminated in this disastrous result, ably and wisely conceived in the general plan by Lord Castlereagh, and composed of the largest forces by sea and land which ever sailed from the British Isles, failed entirely from errors in the execution. Thrice over the opportunity of decisive success was presented to the British Commander-in-Chief, and thrice over he failed to seize it. First, in not landing half his force in the island of Cadsand, when Lord Huntly, with his division, appeared off it, while the other half occupied Walcheren; had he done so, the right wing of the army might have advanced to the Tête du Flandre, and occupied Antwerp, then defenceless, and garrisoned only by 2000 men. Secondly, in not taking advantage of the extraordinary good fortune of the light vessels of the fleet being able to penetrate to Batz, almost in sight of Antwerp, by the eastern mouth of the Scheldt, within three days after the troops landed, and not pushing the land troops direct on that point, so as to seize the batteries and render the straits impassable, by which the French fleet moored off Flushing could alone ascend the river to that fortress.

This would have secured the destruction of the whole vessels afloat, in itself an object of the very highest moment. Thirdly, and above all, if the descent on Cadsand was abandoned, in *not pushing on to Antwerp at the very first* with the whole force not required for the blockade of Flushing—a measure perfectly practicable, *as the flotilla had got up to Batz while that fortress was still in the enemy's hands.*" This would, at very little cost of life, and with very little difficulty, have secured the whole objects of the expedition; the troops, kept in a constant state of activity and excitement, would have, as long as it continued, proved to a great degree inaccessible to the fever; and they might have been brought away covered with laurels before the unhealthy period had reached its worst. It is to the neglect to do any of these things that Napoleon ascribed the failure of the expedition, which otherwise would have been certain of success.* And this, in the last resort, was owing to the military and naval commanders neglecting Lord Castlereagh's instructions to regard the expedition as a *coup-de-main*, in which success was to be attained by vigour and celerity

* Napoleon's words, which are of the very highest importance in this matter, were as follow: "The fleet," said he, "when the expedition arrived on the coast of Holland, was *moored off Flushing*. The great object of Chatham should have been to *cut off the fleet from Antwerp*, which would necessarily have led to the destruction of both, for Antwerp *had only a garrison of* 3000 *men*. This might have been done by pushing forward a corps of 6000 men through South Beveland to Batz *the day the expedition landed;* the fleet would then have been cut off from Antwerp, and both it and the fortress must have surrendered. But the moment that the fleet got up to Antwerp, which it did soon after the siege of Flushing began, the failure of the expedition was certain."—NAPOLEON, *in Montholon*, ii. 261, and i. 219. "I am of opinion," said he to O'Meara, "that if you had landed a few thousand men at first at Williamstadt, and marched direct to Antwerp, you might, between consternation, want of preparations, and the uncertainty of the number of the assailants, have taken it by a *coup-de-main;* but after the fleet got up it was impossible."—*O'Meara*, i. 255. It is easy, doubtless, to be wise *after* the event, but Lord Castlereagh was here *wise before the event;* for the plan of operations which Napoleon said would have been successful—viz., pushing on at once to Batz, and then across to Santlivet, so as to cut off the fleet from Antwerp—was precisely the one for carrying out his *coup-de-main* which Lord Castlereagh had recommended in his detailed instructions to the Commander of the Forces.

CHAP. III.

1809.

of movement, and pursuing it according to the slower rules of methodical warfare.

74. Great dissatisfaction in England at the failure of the expedition.

The public dissatisfaction at this calamitous issue of an expedition, on which the hopes of the nation had so long been set, was the more intense in Great Britain, that its commencement had been, beyond all expectation, successful; and that the victories of Sir Arthur Wellesley in the Peninsula, with a force not half of that at the disposal of Lord Chatham, and against an enemy infinitely superior, had, not without reason, led the people to believe that their soldiers were invincible, and that the fall of the French empire was rapidly approaching. These discontents were worked up to a perfect pitch of frenzy by the accounts daily received of the rapidly increasing sickness and mortality in the isle of Walcheren, and the gaunt figures and woeful visages of such of the troops as returned from that scene of suffering. Ignorant of, or incapable of appreciating, the real causes which had led to its failure, the people burst forth in loud complaints against the authors of the expedition, which, it was said, conceived in folly, and suggested by infatuation, had been planned in ignorance, and executed with incapacity. Upon the head of Lord Castlereagh, as Minister-at-War, and known to have been its principal author, the vials of the public wrath were, in an especial manner, discharged; and this, coupled with the simultaneous retreat of the army in Spain to Estremadura, after the battle of Talavera, and the fearful sickness and mortality of the troops there, spread abroad a general opinion of his unfitness for the lead in military arrangements and combinations. It is not surprising it was so: the English people as yet knew war only in its holiday dress; they were ignorant of the slow steps by which the summits of military greatness are reached, of the fearful waste of life at which the conquests of the French empire were purchased, and that the mortality they deplored in Walcheren and Spain was not a tithe of that which

annually attended the march of the imperial legions. But the spread of these opinions in the nation, which were aggravated by the violence of the daily press, caused an intrigue to come to light in the Cabinet, discreditable only to its authors, but which now reached maturity, and exercised an important influence on the career of Lord Castlereagh, and was not without its effect on the fortunes of the British empire.

75. Intrigue in the Cabinet to overturn Lord Castlereagh.

Unknown to that statesman, and without giving him the slightest reason to suspect its existence, a party had been formed in the Cabinet inimical to him, and the object of which was to get him removed from his position as Minister-at-War, and Lord Wellesley substituted in his room. This was arranged by the whole Cabinet, with the exception of his Lordship, as early as the 4th of April 1809. Mr Canning then said that the views which he entertained regarding the future conduct of the war were so utterly at variance with those adopted and hitherto acted upon by Lord Castlereagh, that they could no longer, with advantage to the public service, form members of the same Government, and that one or other must be called upon to resign. He professed, at the same time, his own willingness to retire. The Duke of Portland, with his whole Ministry, seem to have acquiesced in this opinion; but, dreading the loss of the oratorical talents of Mr Canning, they requested him to withhold his proffered resignation, and suggested the most profound secrecy on the intended removal of Lord Castlereagh. This injunction was strictly obeyed, and Lord Castlereagh remained in entire ignorance that his removal had been resolved on, although it was quite fixed, and the King's pleasure had been taken upon the subject. He continued in this state of ignorance till the beginning of September, when Mr Canning threatened, if the removal was any longer delayed, to resign himself. This brought matters to a crisis, and on the 7th September the painful duty was devolved on Lord Camden of communicating to

April 4.

Sept. 7.

CHAP. III. 1809.

his early and dear friend, whom he had in a manner introduced into public life, the determination of the Cabinet to call upon him to resign. He did not, however, make him aware how long his removal had been resolved on, or that he had been allowed to conduct the war in Portugal, the Talavera campaign, and Walcheren expedition, *after* his removal had been determined on. Lord Castlereagh, conceiving that the change had been resolved on merely to strengthen the Ministry by the substitution of some other person in his room, agreed to resign, but declined to accept the situation of President of the Council, which was pressed upon him by Lord Camden.*

So far all was well; and, contrary to what might have been expected in the circumstances, this extraordinary secret intrigue had arrived at the desired result without

* "*October* 26.—Lord Camden having expressed a great anxiety to talk with me, I called on him this morning, when he entered fully into Lord Castlereagh's business, so far as he had been concerned in it; and after going through his narrative, showed me some letters which had passed between him and the Duke of Portland, respecting the arrangement pressed for by Mr Canning, either for a new division of the departments, or for the Marquess of Wellesley to be named for that of War. Lord Camden admits the communication to have been made to him as early as, Mr Canning states, the end of April; but so far from his being at liberty to acquaint Lord Castlereagh with it, it was made to him under the most solemn injunction of secrecy, respecting which he was so uneasy, that, on the 29th June, he wrote to the Duke of Portland to know whether he was in any mistake about that, to which the Duke answered the same day that he was not, stating that he had most strongly enjoined him to secrecy, in the hope that matters might be so arranged as to avoid the necessity of anything being said to Lord Castlereagh on the subject; his Grace taking upon himself, in the clearest terms, whatever blame might attach to the concealment. A further correspondence took place between Lord Camden and the Duke of Portland in July, begun by the latter on the same subject; his Grace continuing to press for silence till the end of the Walcheren expedition, upon the same ground as before. And at length, when disclosure became indispensably necessary, Lord Camden made it to Lord Castlereagh on 7th September, without, however, letting him know how early the matter had been decided on, not conceiving it necessary that his Lordship's feelings should be wounded by a knowledge that his removal from office had been acquiesced in by his colleagues before the expedition had been set on foot, and that he had been allowed to conduct the whole of it when his death-warrant was in their possession. Lord Castlereagh, then, having been led to believe that the measure was only now adopted to strengthen the Government, agreed to resign, and declined to accept any other office offered him, Lord Camden having pressed his own, the Presidentship of the Council, upon him."—ROSE'S *Diary*, ii. 421, 422. A very entertaining and valuable work.

having been discovered, or the real motives of the proceeding suspected. But this lull in the political tempest was not of long duration. The story of the way in which it came out must be given in Mr George Rose's words: "It was not till Lord Castlereagh was shown *the correspondence of Mr Canning* by Mr Perceval, that he expressed any resentment or unpleasant feeling on the subject. It was from *that* he learned how early his removal had been consented to by his Majesty and his colleagues, and it was in that that he met with passages which induced him to challenge Mr Canning—a proceeding which I still think, even admitting some misconception on the part of Lord Castlereagh, his Lordship was utterly unjustified in adopting. If he had determined to call out any one, the Duke of Portland was the only delinquent to whom he should have resorted; and *he* had no motive whatever, but an anxious desire to reconcile matters in the best way he could, and, if possible, prevent any breach among the Ministers—constantly hoping that an accommodation might be effected in some way or other, and at last thinking that his (Duke of Portland) own resignation could afford an opportunity for such an arrangement as might, to a certain extent at least, be satisfactory to Lord Castlereagh. That, however, *was defeated by Mr Canning urging a separate arrangement*, as is proved by the extracts of the correspondence which I made from the papers Mr Canning put into my hands on the 16th September."[1] The result was, that Lord Castlereagh, conceiving that the whole was an intrigue of Mr Canning's to get him removed from office in order to facilitate his own advancement, and that he himself had been ill-used by being allowed so long and at so critical a juncture to retain the responsibility of office when his removal had been not only resolved on by the Cabinet, but submitted to his Majesty and approved by him, sent Mr Canning a challenge. The parties met and exchanged shots. Mr Canning's fire did not take effect;

76. Lord Castlereagh challenges Mr Canning, who is wounded, and they both resign. Sept. 16.

[1] Rose's Diary, ii. 422, 423.

CHAP. III.

1809.

but that of Lord Castlereagh inflicted a severe flesh wound on the thigh of his adversary, which fortunately did not prove mortal. Both parties, as a natural consequence, resigned their situations in the Cabinet: Lord Wellesley succeeded Mr Canning as Foreign Minister, and Lord Liverpool undertook the arduous duties of Minister-at-War.[1]

[1] Castlereagh Corresp. i. 72, 73.

77. Mr Canning's conduct was unjustifiable, though the duel was equally so.

Without pretending to justify the barbarous practice of duelling, now happily almost gone into desuetude, it may safely be affirmed that Lord Castlereagh was the aggrieved party on this occasion, and that Mr Canning's conduct, so far as the concealment was concerned, was indefensible. Such, accordingly, was the opinion openly expressed at the time by persons the most opposed to each other in ordinary politics.* The mere fact of part of the Cabinet, or indeed the whole excepting one member, entering into a concerted plan to get that one excluded from his situation, is not in itself a matter for reprehension. It may sometimes be a duty which public servants owe to the service to adopt this painful step with an old comrade. But it is one thing as a matter of duty to take steps for the removal of a public servant from a situation of responsibility for which he is deemed unfit; it is another and a very different thing to *allow him to remain in power* during an arduous and critical time, when, simultaneously, decisive steps, unknown to him, have been taken for his dismissal. To do this is at once a dereliction of public duty, and a treachery to private friendship: the first, because it is a retention in office of a person deemed unfit to be intrusted

* "*Tuesday, October* 31.—The Duke of Cumberland again rode up to me in Hyde Park, and talked of the probability of the Government going on, of which he expressed rather a sanguine expectation, but very much disliked Lord Liverpool being at the War Department. He had seen Mr Canning, and read all the papers he put into his hands; after which, he said, he had a strong impression that *that gentleman's conduct was utterly unjustifiable*, and that he was persuaded he now regrets the step he had taken, of which I entertain no doubt. His Royal Highness desired me to read *Cobbett's* paper of last Saturday, in which *he attacks Mr Canning with great severity;* this, however, I feel no disposition to read."—ROSE'S *Diary.*

with its duties; the last, because it is subjecting that person to the responsibility of measures which it is not intended he shall either bring to maturity or reap the credit of their success.

78. Resumé of Lord Castlereagh's achievements at the War Office.

This resignation threw Lord Castlereagh out of office for two years and a half, during which time his energies could be exerted only on behalf of his country by his efforts in Parliament. During this period his biography necessarily turns into an abstract of his parliamentary speeches; and on no occasion did the services he rendered to the public interests stand forth more pre-eminent. But before entering on that, a rapid summary of what he had already done may tend to show how far Great Britain was indebted to his exertions. He entered upon the direction of the War Office in April 1807, on the verge of the battle of Friedland and treaty of Tilsit, when the victories of Napoleon had enabled him to array the whole forces of the Continent, with the exception of Sweden, against us, and when our alliance even with Russia, the last and most faithful of our supporters, had been broken by the unhappy refusal of the Whig Government to render her any, even the most trifling, assistance, during the critical months, when the scales of fortune hung even, which immediately succeeded the battle of Eylau. When removed from office in September 1809, he had succeeded, by his unaided efforts, not only in securing the independence of his country and arresting the torrent of Napoleon's victories, but he had set in motion that chain of events which in their final results produced his decline and fall. He had, by *land* forces skilfully directed, and by taking proper advantage of the means of descent on decisive points which the command of the sea afforded, wrested from the enemy, during this short period, a hundred sail of the line, and forty frigates, of which a third had been brought as prizes, or to be detained in security, to the British shores. He had deprived the French Emperor of both the wings of the vast naval armament which he was preparing for our de-

CHAP. III. 1809.

struction, and which it was the principal object of his life to render irresistible. He had planned and fitted out the greatest expedition of land and sea forces which the world had ever seen, and which, if it had been directed in the field with the same skill and vigour with which it had been planned in the Cabinet, would have cut Napoleon's naval centre through the middle, destroyed one-half of his remaining maritime resources, and for ever determined the war in our favour, by reducing to a mere fraction the fleets of the enemy. He had resuscitated the contest on the Continent, brought the British legions to contend on terms of equality with the French on their own element, and fanned a flame in the Peninsula destined never to be extinguished till the Imperial eagles were chased with disgrace beyond the Pyrenees. He had fitted out an army, and appointed a commander, whose exploits had already recalled the days of Crecy and Agincourt. He had established a military system for the defence of the country, based on the local, and gradually ascending through the regular, militia to the line, which amply provided for the national defence, and furnished an inexhaustible stream of recruits to supply the waste of life in the Peninsular campaigns, and left a disposable force of 60,000 to second the efforts of their immortal general. The military system of Prussia and Austria is in great measure founded on this model. By the example which he set in Spain, he had revived the spirit of resistance in Germany, and brought Napoleon to the brink of ruin on the field of Aspern. He had adopted a plan for the defence of Portugal, which, conceived and executed by Wellington, proved the salvation of that country, and in its ultimate results led to the deliverance of Europe. Never was a Minister who, in so short a time, had conferred such benefits on his country, or so quickly raised it from a state of imminent danger to one of comparative security and imperishable glory. What was the return which his countrymen made to him for these inestimable services? Was it that he was crowned

with laurel, and honoured with a civic ovation for having saved the State? It was that he was overwhelmed with obloquy, and by a unanimous vote of the Cabinet declared unfit to retain the office of WAR Minister!

79. Real causes of this decision of the Cabinet; Lord Castlereagh was in advance of the age.

This extraordinary decision was generally ascribed at the time to the ambitious and intriguing disposition of Mr Canning, which could not brook a rival, and took advantage of the excitement produced by the failure of the Walcheren expedition to overturn, as he thought, a formidable competitor for power. But without disputing the influence which these circumstances may have had in producing the movement which occasioned Lord Castlereagh's temporary fall, it is evident that more general and powerful causes contributed to the result than the efforts of any individual, how ambitious or powerful soever, for his own advancement. The fall of Lord Castlereagh was the work of the *whole* Cabinet, and was very generally approved at the time by a large portion at least of the people, who, judging only from the failure of the Walcheren expedition, and the retreat of Wellington from Talavera, deemed the Minister in fault under whose war administration these untoward results had occurred. These ideas were in an especial manner embraced by Mr Canning, who, although he in public supported Lord Castlereagh's continued warfare, was in secret distrustful of it, and inclined to the Whig system of shutting ourselves up in our island, leaving the Continent to its fate. Having no turn himself for military affairs, and being from early association inclined to the Liberal side, he was more influenced by the brilliant oratory of Mr Fox against Continental exclusion, than the sober historical references of Lord Castlereagh in its favour. It is not surprising that it was so. Judging from the mere surface of things, the case was against the War Minister; and it was not till years after his death that the triumphant vindication of his memory was furnished by the final result, and correspondence and documents published by his enemies. In truth, Lord Castlereagh was the object of

CHAP. III. 1809.

general obloquy from his opponents, and secret distrust from his friends, because he was *in advance of the age* in which his public career commenced, and time had not yet brought the irresistible logic of experience to support his views and confound the predictions of his rivals.

80. Causes of the general distrust of Lord Castlereagh at this time.

He first originated the system of *La Grande Guerre* against France. Striking out alike from the policy of petty sugar-island conquests pursued by Mr Pitt, and the entire abandonment of Continental alliances recommended by Mr Fox and practised by Lord Grey, he assailed at once with the whole combined naval and military force of the country the vital and accessible points of the enemy's territory. The signal success with which this new system was attended in Portugal and at Copenhagen, where it discomfited the most cherished maritime projects of the French Emperor, were inadequate at the time to reconcile the nation to a change of system so entirely at variance with the previous policy of the country and the strongest recommendations of its ablest statesmen. Men were startled by the adoption of a warfare so different from any which Mr Fox had recommended, or Mr Pitt had practised; they could not get over the constant assertions of the Opposition, that it was in vain to attempt to contend with France on the Continent, and that the only way was to husband our resources for the defence of our own shores. The repeated defeats experienced in the former years of the war with small expeditions, appeared to give too much countenance to these ideas. In this state of general opinion, the sending 70,000 British troops at once to the Continent seemed little short of an act of insanity, which the retreat from Talavera and repulse at Walcheren must for ever condemn as fatal, if pursued, to the best interests of the country. They were ignorant of what time has since revealed, that both of these abortive expeditions were conceived on the justest principles, and on the verge of the most splendid success; that but for the tardiness of Lord Chatham, and disregard of Lord Castlereagh's

instructions, the last would have led to the destruction of half the remaining naval resources of the enemy; the first, but for the obstinacy of Cuesta, have brought the allied standards in triumph to Madrid. In a word, the new and resolute mode of warfare originally conceived by Lord Castlereagh and Sir Charles Stewart, and afterwards executed by Wellington, met with the same reception, when first introduced, that the discovery of Watt did from practical mechanics, and its application to sailing vessels from philosophers. There is nothing excites such animosity among men, as disturbing settled ideas; and the intensity of the feeling is in general exactly in proportion to the justness of the new ones.

CHAPTER IV.

SIR CHARLES STEWART, FROM HIS SERVICE WITH THE EXPEDITION TO THE HELDER IN 1799 TO HIS RECEIVING THE THANKS OF PARLIAMENT IN 1809.

1798.

1. Resumé of Sir Charles Stewart's life from 1798.

WHILE Lord Castlereagh was engaged in the arduous duties of Secretary for Ireland during the critical periods of the Rebellion and Union, and the still more important cares of War Secretary during the Copenhagen expedition and the Peninsular and Walcheren campaigns, his brother, Sir Charles Stewart, was occupied in making himself master of those practical details connected with his profession, without the command of which the greatest military native genius will generally be found awanting in the hour of trial. The first important duty on foreign service in which he was engaged was with the expedition which was sent to Holland in 1797, to co-operate with the grand attack of the Allies on the French Republic, then directed by the feeble hands of the Directory during the absence of Buonaparte in Egypt. The regiment to which he was attached, the 18th Dragoons, was, when he joined it in January 1797, a mere skeleton; but under his active direction it rapidly improved in discipline and increased in numbers, and it was one of those selected for foreign service on this occasion.

2. His services in 1799 in Holland.

The service was one of the most important which had occurred since the commencement of the war. The British force, to which a Russian one of still greater numerical amount was to be joined, was charged with the task

of delivering Holland from the thraldom of the French Republicans, who had in the most shameful manner abused the rights of conquest, and rendered the whole inhabitants ripe for revolt. The campaign on which they entered was of unparalleled extent, for it stretched from the banks of the Po over the Alps, and down the whole course of the Rhine to the marshes of Holland. During the whole of the short but active campaign which followed, Sir Charles was incessantly on horseback, and with the outposts, which were almost entirely formed of the troopers of his regiment. In this arduous duty he was frequently under fire, and exposed to the greatest danger. In such a service it was scarcely possible he could long remain unhurt; and he narrowly escaped with his life during an affair of the outposts near Shogenbrugh on the 10th October in the same year. One musket-ball struck his head; and another, nearly at the same instant, came with great violence against his breast. The latter would in all probability have proved fatal, had it not fortunately been turned aside by the brass tube of the glass which hung round his neck.

3. He is appointed Aide-de-Camp to the King, and Under Secretary of State for Ireland.

He returned to England with the expedition, which had partially accomplished the objects for which it had been sent out, as, independently of proving an important diversion to the Austrian forces in Germany, it brought away the entire Dutch fleet at the Texel, consisting of eight sail of the line and several frigates. He was not again engaged in active service till the Peninsular war broke out; but in the interim both honours and important offices fell to his lot. On 25th September 1803 he was promoted to the rank of colonel, and soon after appointed aide-de-camp to the King, a situation of distinction, as a reward of merit, but not attended with active duties. Ere long, however, he was transferred to more important duties of an administrative kind. He was appointed Under Secretary of State for Ireland, an arduous and responsible situation, especially at that time, when the

CHAP. IV. 1808.

island was still smarting under the wounds received, and agitated by the passions awakened, during the Rebellion of 1798, and the outbreak in Dublin in 1803. As his known firmness and resolution of character had procured for him in perilous times this important situation, so the mingled steadiness of his administration, and courtesy of his manners, secured to him during the whole time that he held it—which was till the Peninsular war broke out in 1808—the respect and regard of all classes of the community. This period of his life was signalised by an event of great importance. During his residence at the Castle of Dublin he became intimate with the Earl of Darnley's family, and on the 8th August 1808 he was married to an elegant and accomplished lady, Lady Catherine Bligh, fourth daughter of that nobleman, by whom he had a son, who afterwards became the fourth Lord Londonderry.

4. First operations in Portugal.

But more stirring times were approaching; and the trumpet of war, which sent forth a loud blast from the Spanish peninsula, called Colonel Stewart alike from his pacific duties and the endearments of home to more animating dangers in the field. No sooner had Government determined on sending out an expedition to Portugal than he relinquished his high situation in Ireland, and proceeded to that country with the force commanded by Sir John Moore, in which he had obtained the command of a brigade of hussars. The armament to which he was attached, which consisted of ten thousand men, was the second, in order of time, which sailed from the British shore, and proceeded to Mondego Bay, there to await orders from Sir Hew Dalrymple, who was the Commander-in-Chief. Adverse winds, however, rendered landing there impossible at that time; and as it was of the highest importance that the latter should be informed as soon as possible of the approach of so powerful a reinforcement, Sir John Moore looked anxiously round for an officer upon whose spirit and steadiness he could rely to carry the

information. His choice fell upon Colonel Stewart, who forthwith set out on his mission, which was not a little perilous, as the intervening country was for the most part inundated with the enemy's light troops. It was performed, however, with perfect success. The first part of the journey was made in a frigate: when it neared the shore he got into an open boat, which landed him with no small difficulty at the village of St Nazarath, at a considerable distance from the British headquarters. Thither the journey had to be performed on foot; but after undergoing great fatigue, and surmounting severe hardships, he reached the place of his destination, four days after the battle of Vimeira had rendered the approach of the succour, in the mean time at least, of comparatively little importance.

5. His advance into Spain with Sir John Moore.

After this, Colonel Stewart remained with the army in Portugal, of which, after the recall of Sir Harry Burrard, and the return of Sir Arthur Wellesley on leave to give evidence on the convention of Cintra, Sir John Moore assumed the command. An advance into Spain having been resolved on to support the movements of the Spanish armies, which after their surprising successes were converging in pursuit of the French towards the Ebro, Colonel, now Major-General, Stewart was attached to the division which, under the command of Sir John Hope, afterwards Earl of Hopeton, advanced towards Madrid. Major-General Stewart with his brigade of hussars covered the advance of the column; and the arrangements were made with such foresight and judgment that the troops arrived at Navalcarnero, within twenty miles of Madrid, little fatigued, in the best order and in the highest spirits. The general point of rendezvous for the army was Salamanca, in the vicinity of which it was expected the decisive blow would be struck. Thither, accordingly, after leaving Navalcarnero, Hope's division proceeded by the road of the Escurial, General Stewart with his hussars still covering the advance. The

CHAP. IV. 1808.

junction with the main body at Salamanca having been effected, Sir John Moore, after considerable hesitation, determined to advance. Whilst forming the advanced guard, General Stewart came with his brigade of cavalry upon a French detachment lying at Rueda, between Tordesillas and Nava, which he succeeded in surprising, and where he took a large supply of cotton. On entering Villapondo he again surprised a French major of cavalry, who was proceeding with an escort to join his regiment, and, with his followers, was made prisoner.

6. Gallant actions near Sahagun, and retreat of the army towards Galicia. Dec. 1808.

The army, 25,000 strong, having made a forward movement on Sahagun, threatened the communications of the French army. The greatest enthusiasm for a brief period pervaded the British troops. In several skirmishes between the cavalry of the British and that of the French, the superiority of the former was strikingly evinced, particularly on the 20th December, when Lord Paget defeated a considerable body of the French hussars, and made a hundred and fifty-seven prisoners. But as it was known that Napoleon in person was hastening at the head of 50,000 men from Madrid, across the Guadarama Pass, to attack them in flank and threaten their rear, while Soult with 18,000 lay in their front, this bold line of action was of necessity abandoned; and, to the infinite mortification of the soldiers, orders were given to retreat towards Galicia. General Stewart with his brigade of hussars, consisting of the 10th, 18th, and 8th German dragoons, were intrusted with the arduous duty of covering the rear, and they were soon brought in contact with the very best horsemen in the French army, consisting of the cavalry of the Imperial Guard, which had come up with the Emperor in person. This brought on a most brilliant cavalry action near Benavente, in which General Stewart particularly distinguished himself.[1]

[1] Londonderry's Peninsular War, i. 250-254.

The rearguard had halted for the night in the little town of that name, under the shadow of the magnificent old castle, second to none in Europe, which it contains,

belonging to the Duke of Ossuna. Near it flows the little river Esla, over which a bridge had been thrown at some little distance, which was broken down to secure the troops from surprise during the night. The night passed over without alarm; but early next morning a large body of the enemy's horse, mustering six hundred sabres, were seen trying a ford not far from the ruins of the bridge, and they were soon afterwards crossed and formed on the British side of the stream. The English hussars under General Stewart, deeming the ford impassable, were somewhat scattered in their night-quarters; so that two hundred men, composed of the detachments forming the outposts, alone could be got together at first to check the progress of the enemy, who were already formed, and preparing to attack the British rearguard. Notwithstanding the disparity of force, this small body under Colonel Otway gallantly advanced, and repeatedly charged the leading squadron, so as to impede the formation and check the advance of the enemy. Meanwhile, the 10th, forming part of the brigade, was rapidly formed in the rear, concealed by some houses; and while they were mustering, the pickets in front continued charging and retiring so as to cause the enemy's horsemen to advance, which they did as if to certain victory. Suddenly, when they were sufficiently near, the pickets halted; the reserve wheeled out from behind their cover; and General Stewart at the head of the pickets, and Lord Paget leading the 10th, with a loud cheer, at full speed bore down upon the enemy. The shock was very violent—for the cavalry of the French were the hussars of the Imperial Guard, second to none in that noble array for prowess and hardihood—and for a few seconds they stood their ground stoutly. In the *mêlée*, General Stewart, who was in the front, had his sword struck out of his hand; but it was immediately replaced by that of Lieutenant-Colonel Hosy.[1] After a vehement struggle, the Imperial Guard broke, and fled in haste across the Esla,

7. Gallant action near Benavente. Dec. 28.

[1] Napier's Pen. War, i. 467; Lond. i. 254-256.

CHAP. IV. 1808.

leaving General Lefebvre Desnouettes and seventy prisoners in the hands of the victors, besides sixty killed and wounded. The entire casualties of the British were only fifty men.*

8. Disastrous march to Corunna.

After this affair the army continued its retreat; and the British troops, little inured as yet to hardship, and unaccustomed to retreat before the enemy, became in great part reckless and insubordinate, and the national vice of intoxication appeared in its most frightful colours. Proportionally arduous was the duty of the rearguard, the cavalry of which was under General Stewart, who was charged at once with the task of repelling the enemy and that of collecting and forcing on the numerous isolated men who had left their ranks, and, in great part in a state of drunkenness, overspread the rear. Indefatigable were his efforts during this calamitous retreat to preserve order and repel the enemy; and he was admirably seconded by the troops under his command, especially the German horsemen, who exhibited the steadiness and orderly habits for which the troopers of Germany are so celebrated. But the condition of the army soon became so calamitous, that no efforts of the rearguard or their gallant commander could avert the most grievous losses. Upon the cavalry of the rearguard, which was incessantly in motion, from daybreak to nightfall, following the troops or reclaiming stragglers, the hardships of the retreat fell with double force. Horses broke down at every step; and it was a piteous thing to see these noble animals sinking under their riders, or lying on the ground unable to rise even at the well-known voices of their masters. General Stewart was engaged in

Jan. 3.

a sharp affair of the rearguard near Cacabelos, in which, after at first gaining some success, the French cavalry were at length repulsed with heavy loss, by some companies of the 95th Rifles,[1] supported by the pickets of the

[1] Lond. i. 264-267.

* The gallant conduct of General Stewart and the 18th Hussars on this occasion was specially noticed in the general orders of April 9, 1814.

hussars. After this the country became so rocky that cavalry were of no further use, and they were all sent to Lugo, where they awaited the assembling of the army, as Sir John Moore had resolved to give battle there.

9. Horrors of the retreat.

Thither, accordingly, the troops by degrees arrived, but dreadfully harassed by the forced marches which were made before reaching that place, some of which were as much as forty miles on a stretch in a single day and night. "The men," says Lord Londonderry, "dropped down by whole sections on the wayside and died, some with curses, others with the voice of prayer, in their mouths." Of the women who followed the army, "some were taken in labour on the road; and in the open air, amidst showers of sleet and snow, gave birth to infants who, with their mothers, perished as soon as they had seen the light. Others, carrying perhaps each of them two children on their backs, would toil on, and when they came to look to the condition of their precious burdens, they would find one or both frozen to death. I am well aware that the horrors of this retreat have been again and again described, in terms calculated to freeze the blood of such as read them; but I have no hesitation in saying that the most harrowing accounts which have yet been laid before the public fall short of the reality. . . . The resources of the army wasted away at every mile. First, whole waggon-loads of clothing, arms, shoes, and other necessaries, which had just arrived from England for the purpose of refitting Romana's army, were met, and after the men had helped themselves to those articles of which they stood most in need, the residue was destroyed. Next, two bullock-carts, loaded with dollars to the amount of £25,000, were found to be immovable. The casks which contained the money were stove in, and the treasure thrown from the road over a precipice. Everything was now done as if our case was absolutely desperate, and as if the utmost that could be expected, or even desired, was to escape with our persons at the expense of the

CHAP. IV. 1809.

whole of our *materiel.* Even guns were now abandoned as fast as the horses which dragged them knocked up; and the very sick and wounded were left behind in the waggons of which the bullocks or mules could proceed no further."[1]

[1] Lond. i. 267-269.

10. Battle offered at Lugo, and march to Corunna.

It was in this desperate flight, trying to any army, but especially to one at that time so little inured to suffering as the British, that the army arrived at Lugo, which Sir John Moore had already fixed upon as the place to give battle. As the troops successively arrived there, and took up their ground in the order in which they were to engage, the spirits of the men revived, and the instinct of military honour and subordination returned. A successful affair of the rearguard with the advanced-guard of

Jan. 5.

the enemy, near Constantino, on January 5, in which the horse-artillery and 28th and Rifles greatly distinguished themselves, contributed powerfully to restore the spirits of the soldiers; and before they had been twenty-four hours in rest at Lugo, the aspect of the army was so much changed that they hardly seemed the same men. The old sturdy British resolution not to be beaten reappeared when a pitched battle was supposed to be at hand. Arms were burnished up, accoutrements cleaned, swords sharpened, locks and cartouche-boxes looked to, countenances brightened; and the stragglers from the rear, to a surprising number, came up and resumed their place in the ranks. Notwithstanding all the losses of the retreat, the detachment of a light brigade, and the number of sick and wounded—who had been sent on, some to Vigo, some to Corunna, for embarkation—19,000 men were assembled on the night of the 6th, on the ground which the English General had selected for a decisive battle. The enemy's masses soon made their appearance; and on the 7th they came up in such numbers that every one believed the trial of strength was at hand. General Stewart never doubted it; and every arrangement was made by him for the approaching battle. The cannonade

at times became extremely warm on both sides, and an immediate onset was hourly expected. But daylight gradually slipped away without the enemy making any forward movement with his infantry. That night and the next day passed in a like inaction; and at nightfall on the 9th, as it was known that Victor's corps had reached Villa Franca, so as to be within reach and give the enemy a vast superiority, fires were lighted along the whole line so as to impose on the French, and at midnight the retreat was resumed, the troops taking the road to Corunna.[1]

[1] Lond. i. 269-276.

General Stewart, with his indefatigable hussars, covered that painful march; but the chief difficulties they had to contend with were now over. The day's rest at Lugo had restored the strength of the men: the sick, wounded, women, and children, were in advance; and the enemy, held in awe by their frequent repulses by the rearguard, and the formidable aspect of the army at Lugo, kept at a respectful distance. The troops reached Corunna, accordingly, with comparatively little loss, at least at the hands of the enemy; and they were received with the most generous hospitality by the inhabitants of that town, who did everything in their power to alleviate their sufferings. But the most dismal apprehensions, in which General Stewart fully participated, seized the minds of the soldiers. The bay, instead of being as they expected crowded with transports, was deserted; a few fishing-boats alone broke the wide expanse of the melancholy main; and it was evident to all that fight they must in their present disastrous plight, with the sea in their rear, and no possibility of escape in case of disaster. Notwithstanding the utmost efforts which the admiral had made, it had been found to be impossible to get the transports round from Vigo Bay, where they had, in conformity with previous arrangements, been assembled. Bitterly did the troops now regret that they had not fought in some of the strong positions through which they had passed in the course

11. Arrival of the army at Corunna. Jan. 11.

CHAP. IV. 1809.

of their retreat, when an army could with ease check a force double its own amount. But fight now they must, with exhausted frames, dismounted cavalry, on comparatively unfavourable ground, and no retreat open in case of disaster. Such were the sentiments with which General Stewart and his companions in arms lay down to rest, wrapped in their cloaks, on the ground chosen for the fight on the morrow.[1]

[1] Lond. i. 277-279.

12. Preparation for the battle of Corunna.

Sir John Moore had made, however, the best dispositions which circumstances would admit for the approaching battle; and his heroic end, joined to the courage of his troops, threw a ray of glory over this long series of disasters. None of the insubordination or desponding feelings which had been so conspicuous in the retreat appeared when they at length halted and faced the enemy. The ancient and long-established confidence of the British in battle with the French at once reappeared, and was attended with the same memorable results. The stragglers came in in great numbers, and again took their old places in the ranks; chasms were filled up with old faces; confidence increased with augmented numbers; and the discipline and regularity with which the troops took up their ground afforded the happiest presage of what would be the result should the enemy venture to attack them. The four next days were spent by the French in bringing up their guns and columns from the rear—by the British in embarking the cavalry, heavy artillery, sick, and wounded, on board the transports, which happily made their appearance on the morning of the 15th. Meanwhile the British rearguard, about 14,000 strong, kept the ground they had taken up to defend, which consisted of a series of low heights lying in a semicircular form around the village of Elvina, about a mile in front of Corunna, and barring all access from the land side into that town. A magazine, containing 4000 barrels of gunpowder recently brought from England, was blown up on the night of the 14th, with a terrific explosion.

At length, on the morning of the 16th, when preparations for embarking the troops had commenced, and several regiments were already on the beach, the enemy were seen approaching the British position in four strong columns, containing not less than 20,000 combatants. Two of these columns moved against Moore's right, a third advanced against the centre, while the fourth threatened the left, so as to prevent any succour being sent from it to the centre and right, where the serious attack was intended to be made.[1]

[1] Sir Chas. Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, Jan. 18, 1809, MS.; Lond. i. 280-283.

13. Battle of Corunna. Jan. 16.

Lord William Bentinck's brigade, consisting of the 4th, 42d, and 50th regiments, with the Guards in support, under General Warde, formed the right, against which the main attack of the enemy was directed. The French came on with their wonted impetuosity, nothing doubting that they were advancing to certain victory. The British advanced posts were quickly driven in; and the enemy's main body, in admirable order and with loud shouts, came up immediately behind. Their great superiority enabled them to overlap and extend far beyond the British right, which ran the most imminent risk of being turned. But this danger was averted by the 4th Regiment, which, advancing a little to meet the enemy, threw back its right wing so as to front the column pressing round their flank. Justly delighted with this able movement, Sir John Moore rode off to the centre of the field, deeming the right able to take care of itself. The advance of the French, who had carried the village of Elvina, was then checked by a brilliant charge of the 50th; while the 42d, supported by the Guards, drove back and followed to a considerable distance a heavy column which advanced against it. It was while animating the 42d to this charge that Sir John Moore received his death-wound; and Sir David Baird, the second in command, being about the same time carried off the field severely wounded, the command devolved upon Sir John Hope, who, though successful at all points, did not

CHAP. IV.

1809.

conceive himself at liberty to depart from the plan previously arranged of embarking the troops, which was carried into effect next day, without further molestation from the enemy.[1]

[1] Lond. i. 283-292.

14. Gen. Stewart sails to Lisbon as Adjutant-General of Sir A. Wellesley's army.

General Stewart returned with the troops to England, where the great reputation acquired by the brilliant actions in which he had been engaged, and his skilful direction of his brigade of cavalry during the retreat, won for him the most flattering reception from all ranks, from the Sovereign downwards. This circumstance, joined to the influence of his brother, Lord Castlereagh, who was in the Cabinet as Secretary for War, procured for him a still more important appointment when a second expedition to the Peninsula was determined on. He was appointed Adjutant-General of the army—a situation for which his great administrative as well as military abilities pointed him out as peculiarly qualified. This situation, one of the highest on Sir Arthur Wellesley's staff, had the advantage of bringing him constantly, and on the terms of the closest intimacy, in contact with that great commander—a circumstance to which much of his subsequent career is to be ascribed. They embarked from Portsmouth on Saturday, April 16, 1809, with a stiff breeze; and before they had been long at sea they narrowly escaped shipwreck. The vessel, in striving to pass a bank which runs out from St Catharine's Point into the sea, missed stays, and was in consequence brought within a stone's throw of the breakers, which were directly ahead, the wind blowing hard upon them. Every individual on board expected instant shipwreck, but it proved otherwise. Suddenly the wind, which had hitherto been blowing full on shore, changed, and relieved them from their imminent danger. The voyage proceeded without other accident, and they landed at Lisbon on 22d April.[2]

[2] Londonderry to Lord Castlereagh, April 25, 1809; Lond. i. 302, 303.

Sir Arthur Wellesley brought out with him reinforcements to the amount of 10,000 men; and they were all needed, for the state of affairs when he arrived in

Portugal was most disastrous. After the embarkation of the army at Corunna, the French troops divided; Marshal Ney with his corps remaining at that town and Ferrol to overawe Galicia; while Marshal Soult with his, 25,000 strong, commenced an invasion of the north of Portugal. The remnant of British forces left at Lisbon, not more than 10,000 strong, were wholly inadequate to oppose any resistance to so formidable an invader; the Portuguese new levies were not in a condition to take the field; and the tumultuary bands assembled at Oporto, though burning with zeal and by no means destitute of courage, could not be relied on in a contest in the field with the French veterans. They had no confidence whatever in their officers; and excepting when commanded by Englishmen, could not be brought so much as to face the enemy. The consequence was, that they were totally defeated in an attempt to defend Oporto. That city, the second in the kingdom and the centre of the commercial wealth of the country, had fallen into the hands of the French; and the moment was hourly expected when advices should arrive of Marshal Soult proceeding to the southward, and advancing to plant his eagles on the towers of Lisbon.[1]

15. State of affairs when he landed in Portugal. April 22.

[1] Lond. i. 305-308.

"No words," says Lord Londonderry, "would be adequate to convey the faintest idea of the delight exhibited by all classes of persons as soon as the arrival of Sir Arthur Wellesley at Lisbon became known. All day long the streets were crowded with men and women, congratulating one another on the happy event; and at night the city was illuminated, even in the most obscure and meanest of its lanes and alleys. In the theatres, pieces were hastily got up, somewhat after the fashion of the masks anciently exhibited among ourselves, in which Victory was made to crown the representative of the hero with laurels, and to address him in language as far removed from the terms of ordinary conversation as might be expected from an allegorical personage. But

16. Universal joy in Lisbon on their arrival.

CHAP. IV. 1809.

it was not by such exhibitions alone that the Portuguese nation sought to evince its confidence in its former deliverer, and its satisfaction at his return. Sir Arthur Wellesley was immediately nominated Marshal-General of the armies of Portugal; by which means, whilst the care of training and managing the whole of the interior economy rested still with Beresford, the fullest authority to move the troops whithersoever he would, and to employ them in any series of operations in which he might desire to embark, devolved upon him."[1]

[1] Lond. i. 303, 304.

17. Advance to the Douro.

From the time when General Stewart landed with Sir Arthur Wellesley at Lisbon, to that when from ill health he was most reluctantly compelled to return home for a short time, his personal biography is part of the history of England. Constantly at headquarters, and enjoying the entire confidence of the Commander-in-Chief, he bore a part in all the actions which have rendered memorable the first years of the Peninsular war; and to his talent, energy, and courage, no small part of their success was owing. These qualities were called forth in the very highest degree in the outset of the campaign; for it at once fell on the Adjutant-General of the army to take the labouring oar in the innumerable arrangements and preparations necessary before the campaign could be opened, which Sir Arthur was desirous to do with the greatest possible expedition. All things being at length in readiness, the whole disposable force was assembled at Coimbra in the first week of May, and was reviewed by the General-in-Chief on the 5th of that month. Without the Portuguese (about 6000 strong) there were 17,000 men, besides the detached corps, 2700 more, of whom one half were cavalry. The English and German troops made a magnificent appearance, and were such, in General Stewart's words, "as any general might be proud to command." On the following day the troops all moved forward in the direction of the Douro, and commenced their career of victory.[2]

[2] General Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, May 9, 1809, MS.

Soult, meanwhile, after having made his way with very little difficulty to Oporto, had remained there inactive, while the Portuguese bands under Silviera and others were rapidly closing up in his rear, intercepting his communications, and in some instances making prisoners of his depots of sick and wounded. Great was the surprise felt at the time at this inactivity in a commander of such vigour and ability, and who knew well that his favour and prospects with the Emperor mainly depended on his rapidly performing his allotted task of driving the English into the sea, and planting the French eagles on the towers of Lisbon. But the real cause of his tardiness is now well known. At this period Soult, as already mentioned, seriously entertained the design of making himself independent, and setting up for himself in the north of Portugal. His design was to carve out for himself a sovereignty separate from either Spain or Portugal, having its capital in the north of the latter country, and including in its dominions the whole of Portugal north of the Douro, with the Spanish province of Galicia. To this extraordinary scheme it is now certain that Soult's otherwise inexplicable inactivity after the capture of Oporto, and before the arrival of Wellington, is to be ascribed. He was unwilling to take any steps which might compromise his popularity with his future subjects, which the capture of Lisbon by force of arms unquestionably would have done.[1]

18. Soult's incipient revolt against Napoleon.

1 Wellington to Lord Castlereagh, Gurw. iv. 288; Marmont's Memoirs, iv. 16.

The project was more near succeeding than is generally supposed. Napoleon was no stranger to the designs of his lieutenant; but, with a prudence very little in accordance with his general character, and of which his history does not afford another example, he dissembled his wrath. The truth was, that, with a war with Austria just impending, and one with Spain yet unconcluded, he had no desire to get into a fresh imbroglio with one of his own lieutenants. Mysterious hints of what was going forward were also given to Sir Arthur Wellesley and General

19. Its reception by Napoleon and Sir A. Wellesley.

CHAP. IV.

1809.

Stewart; but, as already mentioned in the Memoir of Lord Castlereagh, they wisely declined to mix themselves in any degree with the plot; and the intelligence they received of the disaffected state of the French army only strengthened their determination to commence active operations without any delay, and expel them by force of arms from the Portuguese territory.[1]

[1] General Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, June 4, 1809, MS.

20. Advance of Sir A. Wellesley to the Douro.

At dawn on the morning of the 7th May, the British army broke up from Coimbra, and advanced in two columns towards Oporto. The design was, that Beresford with his Portuguese, about 6000 in number, might reach Amarante, by Vizeu and Lamego, at the same time that the British columns, some 16,000 strong, should show themselves in front of Oporto, thus threatening the enemy's line of retreat at the same time that his main position was attacked. The French forces were believed to be nearly equally divided, one half being under Soult in person at Oporto, and the other at Amarante to secure its communications and line of retreat, and guard the important bridge at that place. The advanced guards of the two armies first came in contact near the convent of

May 11.

Grijon on the 11th. In this affair, Sir Arthur in person, with a greatly inferior force, defeated a body of 5000 French infantry and 1700 horse. Greatly encouraged by this early success, ever of such importance in war, the British army continued to advance towards the Douro. The French rapidly withdrew as they came on, burning the houses and destroying the crops as they retired; and when, early on the 12th, the British vanguard reached the banks of that great river, they found the southern bank entirely deserted by the enemy, and his forces, amply supported by artillery, strongly posted in the convents and buildings on the northern bank.[2]

[2] Lond. i. 335-337.

At ten in the morning, the British advanced-guard, consisting of Generals R. Stewart's and Murray's brigades, with two squadrons of the 14th under Lord Paget, arrived at the village of Villa Nova, on the borders of the

river, where they were joined by Hill's corps, which had come up from the sea-shore. The bridge was destroyed, and every boat and barge had been moved to the opposite side of the river by Soult. Fortunately, Colonel Waters of the Portuguese service, by whom the destruction of the bridge had been reported, found a single bark some hundred yards distant, concealed in some bushes. Into it this gallant officer instantly threw himself and proceeded to the opposite shore, where he was fortunate enough to find four large barges lying in the mud, and also concealed in some bushes. These he quickly brought over to the other side, and in them three companies of the Buffs, headed by General Paget, instantly embarked, and, pushing boldly across without a moment's delay, took possession of some houses on the opposite bank. General R. Stewart, who witnessed this bold stroke, instantly brought up fresh troops to the assistance of those on the other side, and planted some guns on a promontory, which galled the enemy, who were now crowding in great numbers to assault the defenders of the houses. After a severe action the Buffs succeeded in keeping their ground; and soon after General Murray, a little higher up the river, got over two squadrons of the 14th and two battalions of the Germans. The enemy, seeing the passage now made good at two points, retreated from all his positions on the river, and abandoned Oporto entirely. They took the road to Amarante, closely followed by the 14th Dragoons under General (Charles) Stewart and Colonel Harvey, the latter of whom lost an arm in single combat with one of the French troopers. General Stewart led several brilliant charges against the enemy's rearguard, on whom they inflicted a serious loss, until they were recalled to Oporto by the Commander-in-Chief. With such haste was the retreat of the French conducted, and so complete the surprise, that Sir Arthur Wellesley dined at their headquarters on the dinner which had been prepared for Marshal Soult.[1]

21. Passage of the Douro. May 14.

1 General Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, May 19, 1809, MS.; Lond. i. 337-340.

CHAP. IV.

1809.

22. Pursuit of the French out of Portugal.

This brilliant exploit of passing a broad and deep river in the face of an enemy of equal strength arrayed on the opposite side, made a great sensation in Europe. General Stewart came in for his full share of credit for the achievement, and was specially mentioned with becoming praise in Sir Arthur's despatches.[1] The advantage thus gained was followed up with as much vigour as it had been commenced. During the night the whole artillery-waggons and commissariat stores were got over; and early on the morning of the 13th the advanced-guard, under General Murray, set out in pursuit. Meanwhile orders were despatched to Beresford—who, with his Portuguese, after forming a junction with Silviera, who commanded another body of native militia, had gained possession of the bridge of Amarante in the enemy's rear—to move upon Chaves and obstruct the retreat by that line, while Murray and Stewart headed the pursuit on the roads towards Amarante and Braga. Soult was retiring with the utmost haste upon Amarante, when he heard of its capture by Beresford. His position seemed altogether desperate. But, abandoning all his guns, and destroying the greater part of his stores at Penafiel, he led his army by rugged mountain-paths over the craggy summit of the Sierra Catalina, and gained the great road by Braga to Chaves. Upon hearing this, Sir Arthur wisely stopped the advance of the greater part of his troops, judging, as he himself said, "that a body of men which chooses to abandon its guns, ammunition, and everything which constitutes an army, must necessarily escape in a mountainous country from a pursuing force which is burdened with all these encumbrances." The pursuit, however, was continued by the advanced-guard; and on the 16th they came up with the rearguard of the enemy at Salamonde, on the road to Chaves. The latter were totally defeated, with the loss of 500 men and all the plunder they had taken at Oporto.[2] After this disaster, Soult, finding himself again anticipated by Beresford at Chaves,

[1] Ann. Reg. 1809; State Papers.

May 16.

[2] General Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, May 21, 1809, MS.; Lond. i. 347-354.

abandoned the highroad and fled across the mountains from Montalegre to Orense in Galicia, with his troops suffering the greatest hardships, and in a state of disorganisation exceeding that of Sir John Moore in the retreat to Corunna.

23. Operations in Spain are determined on with Cuesta.

After these brilliant operations the army returned to Coimbra, where Sir Arthur was joined by 5000 fresh troops from England. Though they fell short by a half of what were necessary to have enabled him to commence operations in Spain towards Madrid with any reasonable prospect of success, yet they added much to the strength of the British army, and their arrival diffused the most lively satisfaction among the troops. A forward offensive movement into Spain began in connection with Cuesta, who commanded the Spanish forces which had retired into Estremadura after the capture of Madrid by Napoleon. Great difficulty was experienced in concerting any plan of operations with that commander, who was an impracticable and irascible old man, as well as in adjusting the contending pretensions of the British generals who were senior in rank to Marshal Beresford, but found themselves momentarily placed under his orders, in consequence of his local rank as commander-in-chief of the Portuguese army, when they acted together. General Stewart, as adjutant-general of the army, exerted himself, in conjunction with the Commander-in-Chief, to the utmost, to soothe these unhappy jealousies; but all their efforts could not prevent one officer of distinction, General Murray, from relinquishing his command, and returning to England. These difficulties having been at length surmounted, a plan of operations with no small difficulty arranged with Cuesta, and the troops refreshed by rest from their late fatigues, the army resumed its march on the 6th June, taking the road up the valley of the Tagus by Thomar to the Spanish frontier. On the day following, headquarters reached Abrantes, and the troops were assembled there, mustering not quite twenty thousand effective sabres and bayonets.[1]

[1] Gen. Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, June 14, 1809, MS.; Lond. i. 359-361

CHAP. IV.

1809. 24. Plan of operations.

Cuesta represented to the English general that the enemy's force to be encountered in the attempt to dislodge him from Madrid consisted of Victor's corps, 26,000 strong, which lay at Merida and Caceres, 13,000 foot and 3000 horse under Sebastiani at Ciudad Rodrigo, and 4000 at Madrid,—in all, 49,000 men, but separated from each other by considerable distances and a range of mountains, the direct roads over which were impracticable for artillery or carriages.* Still, to advance against such a force with only 20,000 British soldiers, was obviously a very hazardous undertaking, especially as the Spaniards under Cuesta, it was well known, could not be relied on. The Spanish general, however, who had all the pride and self-confidence of his nation, contended strongly for a united forward movement—a project to which both Sir Arthur and General Stewart made the greatest possible objections. Considerable delay occurred in consequence of this divergence of views; and, meanwhile, the soldiers, whose spirits had been highly elated by the passage of the Douro, became very impatient for action, and loudly complained that some mark of the Sovereign's favour had not been bestowed on their chief and those who had distinguished themselves on that occasion. The three weeks' rest, however, which were gained while the plans were under consideration, were of great service in bringing up reinforcements from the coast, and improving the strength both of the men and horses; and certain forward movements were made with part of the troops so as to menace Victor's flank. That general in consequence, dreading the convergence of the two armies against his single corps, withdrew his whole army across the Tagus, and commenced his retreat towards Madrid, followed by Cuesta. Upon hearing of this Sir Arthur resolved to

June 30. enter Spain, which he immediately did in two columns, the one moving upon Placencia by Coria, another upon

* Sebastiani with his corps was really to the south of the Tagus in La Mancha.

the same point by Moraza. It was easy to see that these movements would soon lead to important operations, for advices were received that Victor had halted in his retreat at Talavera de la Reyna, where he had taken up a strong position; and that King Joseph, with 5000 men from Madrid, and Sebastiani, with 17,000 from La Mancha, were moving on the same point, while Soult and Ney in the north had united their forces, and occupied Orense, threatening a renewed invasion of the north of Portugal.[1]

[1] General Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, July 11, 1809, MS.; Lond. i. 371-375.

The army commenced its march on 30th June, by Castello Branco, and arrived at Coria on 5th July. Cuesta was approaching from the south with 38,000 men; but the greater part of them were new levies upon whom no reliance could be placed. The two armies came into communication on the 10th, at Placencia, where Sir Arthur had a personal conference with Cuesta, whose irritability, naturally great, was much increased by having been kept, with all his troops, four hours under arms awaiting the arrival of the English general, who unfortunately had missed his way by the fault of his guides. The appearance of the men and horses was far from inspiring any confidence in their efficiency in the field. "With the exception," says General Stewart, "of the Irish brigade, and a battalion or two of marines from Cadiz, and the remnants of their grenadier battalions, the infantry was little better than armed peasants, armed partially like soldiers, but completely unacquainted with a soldier's duty. This remark applied fully as much to the cavalry as the infantry. The horses of many of them were good, but their riders manifestly knew nothing of movements or discipline; and they were, on this account, as well as on the score of miserable military equipment, quite unfit for general service. The artillery, again, was numerous, but totally unlike, both in order and arrangement, that of other armies; and the generals appeared to have been selected according to one rule alone—namely, that of seniority.

25. Interview with Cuesta, and appearance of the Spanish army. July 10.

CHAP. IV. 1809.

They were almost all old men, and, except O'Donaghoe and Largas, evidently incapable of bearing the fatigues or surmounting the difficulties of one hard campaign. Cuesta, after the interview was over, retired to rest, quite overpowered with fatigue. He returned to supper, however, at eleven, and sat till past midnight, perfectly silent, neither taking the least part in the conversation, nor, apparently at least, paying any attention to it. Those around him assured us that this manner was not assumed, but perfectly natural, and always the same. He governed his followers by a system of silence and terror, of which they all stood wonderfully in awe."[1]

[1] General Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, July 15, 1809, MS.

26. Advance to Talavera, and preparations for a battle there.

Offensive operations having been agreed on at this conference between the two generals, Sir Arthur returned to his own headquarters on the following day, and orders were immediately given for the troops to advance towards Talavera. The plan arranged was that Cuesta, with his whole force, should press on Victor in front, while Venegas, who commanded a Spanish army in La Mancha, threatened his left, and Sir Arthur his right flank. General Stewart thought the French general would not fight where he stood, but he proved to be mistaken.

July 20.

On the 20th the army reached Oropesa, where it halted for a day, and was reviewed by Cuesta. The splendid appearance, exact discipline, and martial bearing of the troops, exhibited a very different spectacle from the melancholy one which his own men had presented some days before. The troops of both armies were now arranged in the order in which they were to attack the enemy, who was known to be in position in great strength close to Talavera, a short distance in front, though not yet in sight. The Spanish army advanced on the highroad to that town; the British by a parallel road through the mountains in the direction of San Roman. When the Spanish advanced-guard approached Talavera, the French horsemen showed themselves outside the town, and the Spanish cavalry, who were greatly superior in numbers, had several

admirable opportunities to charge. Of these, however, they did not avail themselves, but hung back—a circumstance which created not a little disappointment in the breasts of Sir Arthur, General Stewart, and the other officers who were witnesses of the discouraging exhibition. The French stood firm in front of Talavera as long as the Spaniards alone were in sight; but no sooner did the heads of the red-coated columns begin to show themselves on their right than they retired precipitately, and took up their defensive position on the eastern bank of the Alberche, in rear of that town. Sir Arthur approached to the edge of the stream, which was fordable at nearly all points; and as Victor's corps alone was as yet on the ground, he was extremely anxious to begin the attack next day before the enemy's strength was doubled by the reinforcements which were coming up. Nothing, however, could overcome the procrastinating habit of the Spanish general; and when at length he was brought, late on the evening of the 23d, to agree to an attack with the united force on the following morning, and the British advanced-guard moved on at two for that purpose, it was discovered, to their infinite mortification, that the enemy had decamped during the night, and not a vestige of their army was to be found on the ground they had occupied on the preceding evening.[1]

CHAP. IV. 1809. July 22.

July 23. [1] General Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, July 30 and Aug. 4, 1809, MS.; Lond. 389-397; i. Gurw. iv. 499.

On the morning of the 24th, General Stewart was sent forward with two squadrons of cavalry to reconnoitre, and he came up with the enemy's rearguard, with which he had a sharp action near St Olalla. From the prisoners taken on that occasion, he ascertained the route which the retiring columns of the enemy had taken, which was to Torrijos, on the road to Toledo. Meanwhile, Cuesta followed close upon the retiring French army, fondly hoping that they were in full retreat to Madrid or the Ebro; but, in truth, they were only falling back to the fixed-on point of junction of the three armies of Victor, Sebastiani, and Joseph in person, which were converging to one point.

27. The French forces unite, and again approach Talavera, July 25.

CHAP. IV.

1809. July 25.

They met, accordingly, behind the Guadarama, on the 25th, and constituted an imposing mass of fifty thousand men present with the eagles, under Victor, Jourdan, and Sebastiani, three of the most experienced chiefs in the French army. No sooner was the junction effected than they wheeled about, and advanced against Cuesta's advanced-guard, which had got in pursuit as far as St Olalla. It immediately fell back in such confusion that a total rout would have ensued if Sir Arthur had not hastily moved up Sherbrook's division, which protected them. This done, that general withdrew over the ford into the camp at Talavera, leaving Mackenzie's division in possession of a convent and wood on the right bank of the Alberche.[1]

[1] Lond. i. 398-401; Sir A. Wellesley to Lord Castlereagh, Aug. 1, 1809; Gurw. iv. 504.

28. Position of the troops at Talavera.

Cuesta's position was now extremely perilous, for he was threatened in front by an army greatly superior to his own, both in numbers and efficiency; and in his rear was a river into which, if attacked, he would infallibly be driven, and where he would lose all his guns and baggage. From this strait he was delivered by the quickness and decision of the British general, who, early next morning, drew the Spanish troops across the Alberche, and placed the whole army, Spanish as well as British, on an extremely advantageous position, having the right leaning on the town of Talavera, where the Spaniards were posted, and their other flank stretching to a rocky hill, the lowest ridge of the Sierra de Gata, which covered the extreme left. The Spanish troops were, for the most part, stationed among some olive groves, and along a road the embankment of which formed an excellent parapet. The British stood in the open field, their right touching the Spanish left, and leaning on an eminence, on which a redoubt had been begun, their left on a craggy mount protected by a deep ravine, at the bottom of which ran a rivulet. The French, when they arrived, drew up directly opposite to them, and their forces were massed in formidable proportions against the British left, where it was evident the principal attack would be made. Numerically, the Allies were superior:

the French having 50,000 men, of whom 7500 were cavalry, with 80 guns; the Allies 60,000, of whom 9000 were cavalry, with 100 guns. But in the quality of the troops the French had a decided superiority, for their soldiers were homogeneous, and all well disciplined; whereas of the Allies, only the British soldiers, not quite 20,000 strong, of whom 3000 were horse, with 30 guns, could be relied on for the shock of battle.[1]

[1] Gurw. iv. 504; Wellesley Desp. Napier, ii. 361; Lond. i. 405, 406.

29. Bloody combat on the evening of the 27th July.

The Allies, however, were not permitted to take up their position without sustaining a most serious conflict. About three o'clock General Mackenzie's division, which was still on the right bank of the Alberche to support the retreat of the Spaniards, was suddenly attacked with the utmost fury by two strong French columns formed by Lapisse's division of Victor's corps. So vehement was the onset, that the 87th and 88th Regiments, which were first attacked, were thrown into confusion, and the division pierced through the centre. Sir Arthur and General Stewart, who hastened to the spot, found everything in such disorder that it was with great difficulty they could distinguish in the smoke their own troops from the enemy. Quickly, however, the 31st, 45th, and 60th were got in hand, who covered the withdrawal of the broken regiments, and the retreat was conducted in a regular manner to the height on the British left, where the troops took up their ground and stood firm. They were immediately assailed there with the utmost impetuosity by the French columns, who advanced at the *pas de charge*, under cover of a tremendous cannonade. Mackenzie's men having been moved into the rear to re-form, they were met by Hill's division, who held their ground, and stood the onset nobly. The 48th and 29th, after pouring in a destructive volley, rushed forward with the bayonet, and drove the enemy down the ridge, to the summit of which they had attained. "It was," says General Stewart, "a splendid charge, and it was one upon the issues of which much might have hung; for had the height in question

CHAP. IV. 1809.

been carried, the strength of our position became at once exposed. It was not, however, made without a heavy loss to the brave troops engaged, for the enemy fought nobly; and we had to lament, when darkness put an end to the contest, about 800 in killed and wounded, among whom were several very valuable officers." Both Sir Arthur and General Stewart were personally engaged in this terrible strife, and by their energy and decision powerfully contributed to the important success with which it terminated.[1]

[1] Sir A. Wellesley to Lord Castlereagh, July 29, 1809; Gurw. iv. 504, 505; Lond. i. 405, 406.

30. Battle of Talavera. July 28.

The troops on both sides slept on their arms; and at daylight on the morning of the 28th, two strong columns of French troops, the grenadiers of Ruffin's division, advanced to the attack of the British left, who occupied the hill there. "Desperate and numerous," says General Stewart, "were the efforts which they made to render themselves masters of the summit. But nothing could exceed the gallantry and steadiness of the brave men who opposed them. The brigades of Generals Tilson and R. Stewart were here: they permitted the enemy again and again to arrive within a few paces of the ridge, and then drove them back in admirable style with the bayonet, till, disheartened by so many repulses, they at last retreated altogether, leaving the ground covered with their dead. Had our cavalry been at this moment sufficiently forward in the plain and valley, they might have produced a terrible impression upon these fugitives, for the enemy retired in great confusion, and opportunities of making charges occurred such as could not have been by any possibility overlooked: but unfortunately they were too far in the rear. The broken masses were thus enabled to re-form themselves, and to withdraw, in something like order, within their lines." Their loss, however, was enormous; and their troops appeared to be dispirited and dismayed in so much that they made no farther movement; for the next three hours no firing was heard on any part of the field.[2]

[2] Lond. i. 406, 407; Napier, ii. 392.

This pause, however, was but the prelude to a still

more serious attack. Having now ascertained the strength of the British position, and the resolution of the troops who defended it on the left, and rightly judging that if the English could be driven off the field it would be no difficult matter to dispose of the Spaniards, the enemy arrayed their whole force in four weighty columns, with which they advanced, three against the centre and right, and one round the extreme left, of the British line. The attack was preceded by a tremendous fire from all their guns, eighty in number, which were brought forward to the front, and nearly overpowered the thirty pieces which Sir Arthur had to oppose to them. Under cover of this terrible discharge, and preceded by a cloud of tirailleurs, which kept up an incessant and biting fire as they advanced, the columns on the French left advanced with a quick and yet steady pace, till they were close upon the British. Still not a musket was fired from that martial array: steady, and with the coolness which discipline alone can give, the men stood, with their pieces in their hands, ready to fire the moment that the word was given. No sooner was it heard than a crashing volley broke from the whole line, which staggered the heads of the columns, and, taking advantage of the momentary confusion, the British rushed forward, and attacked the enemy with the bayonet. Campbell's division, on the right, took thirteen guns in close hand-to-hand fight; and as the French were preparing to regain them, they were charged in flank by a Spanish regiment of horse, and again overthrown. Meanwhile the Guards in the centre, emulating the gallant conduct of the 7th and 53d, which had gained these glorious successes, rushed forward, and, overthrowing the columns in their front, not only drove the broken enemy down the hill which they had just mounted, but, pursuing them up the opposite side, got into the centre of their line.[1] We have Wellington's authority for the assertion, that this gallant but imprudent advance all but

31. Desperate attack of the French on the centre and right.

[1] Wellington's Memorandum on Talavera; Gurw. iv. 510; Gen. Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, July 30, 1809; Napier, ii. 401, 402; Kausler, 538.

CHAP. IV.

1809.

lost the battle. The Guards were met by the enemy's reserve in firm order, who threw in a tremendous fire in their front, while strong batteries poured in destructive volleys both of grape and canister on either flank. They were quickly driven back, and, the disorder spreading to the Germans who stood next them in the line, the whole centre was for some minutes thrown into confusion, and the battle was all but lost.

32. Victory of the British.

In effect, it would have been lost with a general of less quickness and decision than Sir Arthur Wellesley. But no sooner did he see the forward rush of the Guards, than, foreseeing the result, he moved forward the 48th Regiment, and that splendid corps, advancing through the throng of fugitives with admirable steadiness, opened and let them through, and, again closing, moved against the flank of the pursuing French, and threw in so destructive a volley, that they were constrained to pause. Relieved by this timely succour, the Guards and Germans halted, re-formed, and returned to the charge, and the enemy, assailed now in front and flank, were, after an obstinate struggle, driven back. This was their last effort; for their right column had been paralysed by a brilliant cavalry charge. The whole infantry now retreated across the Alberche, about three miles in the rear, and the battle ceased at all points. A frightful accident occurred after the firing had ceased. The dry grass on which the troops had fought took fire in consequence of the ignition of some cartridges which were lying about, and great numbers of the brave men who had fought on either side, and were lying intermingled, were scorched, and some burnt to death.[1]

[1] Lond. i. 409-411; Gurw. iv. 508; Napier, ii. 403-406; Kausler, 538.

33. Results of the battle.

Such was the battle of Talavera—one of the most glorious which the British ever fought. For two days twenty thousand British, with thirty guns, had combated and finally defeated five-and-forty thousand French with eighty pieces of artillery; for the Spaniards, who occupied the strong ground near Talavera on the ex-

treme right, were scarcely engaged at all, save in a distant cannonade. Well knowing that they were incapable of moving in order under fire, the French wisely let them stand where they were, and directed their whole force against the British. The loss of the latter was very severe: it amounted to 1000 killed and 4000 wounded on the 28th alone; including the previous day, the loss was 6268. The Spanish loss was very trifling; but the French is now known, from the returns in the War Office at Paris, to have been 8794. The British took seventeen guns and nine *caissons* from the enemy, and two hundred and eighty-nine prisoners.[1]

[1] Lond. i. 412; Kausler, 539; Jom. iii. 348; Gen. Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, Aug. 4, 1809, MS.

34. Picturesque anecdotes during the battle.

As the courage and prowess displayed on both sides in this memorable battle were of the very highest order, so also was the respect mutually inspired in the breasts of the gallant antagonists. During the cessation from the battle in the heat of the day, Sir Arthur Wellesley, with General Stewart, General Murray, and the other officers of his staff, was seated on the top of the hill which had been so obstinately contested, surveying the whole field of battle; he was nowise moved by a message brought him by Colonel Donkin from the Duc d'Albuquerque, that Cuesta was betraying him. He knew his man well; how irascible and obstinate he was, yet true as steel, and passionately hostile to the French. Meanwhile the soldiers on either side, overcome by the heat, struggled down to the rill which ran in the hollow between the two armies to drink. "Not a shot was fired," said Lord Castlereagh, in recounting the scene in the House of Commons, "not a drum was beat; peaceably the foes thus drank from the opposite banks of the same rill; and not unfrequently the hands which had so recently before been dyed in mutual slaughter, were extended and shaken across the water in token of their mutual admiration of the valour and constancy displayed on both sides."[1]

[1] Lord Castlereagh's speech, Feb. 1, 1810; Parl. Deb. xv. 293.

Had Sir Arthur Wellesley possessed 20,000 additional English troops, or even 5000 British horse, he

CHAP. IV.

1809.

35. Position of the British army after the battle.

would have tried the bold game of advancing at once to Madrid, the more especially as the great army which had stood the shock at Talavera was broken up; the King, with Sebastiani and the reserve, 20,000 strong, having taken the road to Madrid, now threatened by Venegas, from New Castile, on the one side, and Sir Robert Wilson on the other, who had pushed on to within seven leagues of the capital, and entered into communication with it. But the diminished strength of his army, and the threatening aspect of the forces which were accumulating in his rear, forbade any such attempt. The loss of 6000 men at Talavera had not been compensated to the extent of one-half by Craufurd's division, consisting of the 43d, 52d, and 95th Regiments, which, by great exertions, and marching *sixty-two miles in twenty-six hours*, had succeeded in reaching headquarters the day after the battle. Including this seasonable reinforcement, the British troops were barely 18,000 sabres and bayonets. Victor had more than that number directly in his front; and Soult, Ney, and Mortier, who had concentrated every disposable man, were already crossing the mountains separating Leon from Estremadura, and advancing with 35,000 men to cut off his communication with Lisbon. Provisions were every day becoming more scarce; already the distribution of meat had ceased, and the troops were put on half rations, made up partly of beans, partly of rye; while 4000 wounded encumbered the hospitals of Talavera, for whose tending and even maintenance no provision whatever had been made, or was perhaps possible, by the Spaniards, in the distracted state of their country. In these circumstances Cuesta proposed that the Allied force should be divided, half to remain at Talavera, and the other half to proceed with a portion of his men against Soult and Ney in rear. But Sir Arthur, deeming such a division too perilous to be thought of, as it was evident no reliance whatever could be placed on the Spanish troops, and

each half of the British force would be exposed to certain destruction when combating alongside of their inefficient allies, wisely rejected this proposal, and insisted that the English troops should be kept together. But he gave the Spanish general the choice of remaining where he was, or proceeding to the rear to combat Soult and Ney. Cuesta, deeming his men more likely to succeed in position than in motion, preferred the former, and in consequence Sir Arthur set out on the 3d August, taking with him the whole British army, but leaving 2000 wounded, who could not bear carriage, in Talavera, under charge of the Spanish general.[1]

[1] General Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, Aug. 8, 1809, MS.; Lond. i. 414-417; Gurw. iv. 524-534.

36. Cuesta abandons the British wounded.

From intercepted letters obtained by Cuesta, immediately after the British army had begun its march, it appeared that, while Soult, Ney, and Mortier had received orders to press on with the utmost expedition, so as to threaten the British communications, King Joseph would, with Victor's and Sebastiani's corps and his guards, again resume the offensive, and threaten Talavera, then probably stripped of the English. This intelligence so alarmed the Spanish general, that he instantly commenced the evacuation of Talavera, leaving the British wounded, intrusted at at his own request to his care, to their fate, although no enemy was as yet in sight! With such celerity was this resolution acted upon, that the evacuation was instantly commenced, and under circumstances of the most heartless selfishness. "Though literally encumbered," says General Stewart, "with cars and waggons, the old Spaniard refused to spare us more than seven for the transportation of the brave men who had fought and bled for his country. The abandonment of the town was, as may be imagined, a most heartrending scene. Such of our poor soldiers as were in a condition to move at all, crawled after us, some still bleeding, and many more with their wounds open and undressed; whilst those whose hurts were too severe to permit of this, lay upon their pallets, and implored their comrades not to desert them. By indefati-

CHAP. IV. 1809.

gable exertions, and by sacrificing a great quantity of baggage, Sir Arthur Wellesley got together forty cars, which enabled us to bring forward in all about 2000 men; but there were still some hundreds left behind, all of whom, had Cuesta acted with humanity or honour, might have been preserved. . . . During the night of the 3d, the Spaniards came pouring in upon us like a flock of sheep; and a scene of noise and confusion ensued, of which no words could convey an adequate conception."[1]

[1] Lond. i. 417, 418.

37. Sir Arthur retreats by the bridge of Arzobispo to the south of the Tagus. Aug. 4.

Sir Arthur, as might well be supposed, was highly indignant at this unworthy desertion, and remonstrated strongly against it, both in private and in his public despatches, but in vain. The deed was done, and could not be undone, and he soon after received intelligence which rendered it evident that a change of direction in the march of the British troops, or an immediate battle with Soult and Ney, was inevitable. Advices were received that Soult had passed the Teitar stream, and was already at Naval-Moral on the highroad to the bridge of Almaraz, with 30,000 men. If the retreat was continued by this road, therefore, they would have to fight their way through these corps with little more than half the number of British troops, half-starving, worn out with fatigue, and encumbered with a large train of wounded. Wisely deeming the risk of such an encounter too great to be hazarded with the only army in the Peninsula now capable of making head against the enemy, Sir Arthur altered his line of retreat, and, defiling rapidly to the left, passed the bridge of Arzobispo with the whole British army, which was rapidly followed by the Spaniards. Both armies assembled on the south of the Tagus on the following day; and, having by great exertions surmounted the mountains to Toralida, through roads deemed impassable for artillery, they reached Deleitosa on the 7th, where at length the wearied men got a few days of repose. During this melancholy retreat the troops were in the lowest spirits; no bread had been served out from the

Aug. 7.

beginning to the end of that march, and the men had tasted none for three whole days. In addition to suffering from hunger, they had a rough and precipitous mountain road to follow; the country on either side was entirely laid waste; and it was only by strenuous exertions that the guns could be dragged up the steep ascents. Such was the state of the British army, not quite 17,000 strong, when, threatened by 60,000 excellent troops under Soult, Ney, Mortier, and Victor, they took up their ground on the southern bank of the Tagus.[1]

[1] General Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, Aug. 12, 1809, MS.; Lond. i. 421, 422; Gurw. v. 66.

38. Noble conduct of Sir A. Wellesley.

The conduct of Sir Arthur Wellesley at this perilous crisis was above all praise. It was universally supposed in the army that the united French forces would cross the Tagus, and fall on the wearied and dispirited remnant of the British host, and not a few looked upon affairs as utterly desperate, and all chance of successful resistance to the French power in the Peninsula as taken away. Sir Arthur was not insensible to the danger, and was well aware of the gloomy feelings which pervaded his army, but he never for a moment despaired. On the contrary, his language was calculated to inspire confidence in all around him. "He saw," says General Stewart, "and felt the difficulties of his situation keenly enough, perplexed as he was by being kept a good deal in the dark as to the steps which the enemy were preparing to take, and harassed and annoyed by the continued supineness of the Spanish authorities; but he was far from regarding the game as lost. On the contrary, he spoke and acted, on all public occasions, as if events were taking the very course which he had expected them to take; and he satisfied every one either that he had provided, or that he was perfectly competent to provide, against any accident or contingency which might chance to occur." But though he spoke thus to those around him, and impressed even those most in his confidence with such ideas, he was very far, in his inmost thoughts, from entertaining such sentiments. He had felt the weakness of the military force in

CHAP. IV. 1809.

point of numbers which Great Britain could furnish to his standards; he had seen the Spanish troops, and learned by dear-bought experience how unfit they were either to combat in the field, or furnish any efficient material aid to his army. He saw plainly that the contest would come to rest entirely upon his own men; and, contemplating a defensive struggle in Portugal, he was secretly arranging with his engineers the construction of those memorable lines in front of Lisbon, which first brought to a stand the hitherto irresistible legions of France.[1]

[1] Lond. i. 422, 423; Gurw. v. 21-33, 69-71.

39. Continued disasters of the Spaniards, and retreat of the British into the valley of the Guadiana.

Events ere long occurred which too clearly demonstrated the inefficient condition of the Spanish troops, and how perilous would be any combined operations in which they were to bear a part. For a month after the passage of the Tagus, the British army remained unmolested in its quarters, during which Sir Arthur and General Stewart were incessantly occupied in improving the materiel of the force and procuring supplies, and the soldiers rapidly recovered from their fatigue. But during this time an unbroken succession of disasters had befallen the Spaniards. First, the strong rearguard left by Cuesta at the bridge of Arzobispo was attacked and defeated by Victor; next, Sir Robert Wilson was worsted at Puerto de Banos, and thrown back with his Portuguese into Portugal; and then Venegas was beaten at Almonacid. Soon after, his successor General Areizaga sustained a dreadful defeat at Ocana in La Mancha, which laid open the road to Andalusia to the victorious legions. The Duc del Parque, who had gained a transient success, was defeated at Alba de Tormes. The English general, seeing the whole Spanish forces routed and dispersed the moment the pressure of the English army upon the French was taken away, justly deemed his situation too critical to be longer maintained so far in advance in Spain; and as his troops were becoming very unhealthy, he resolved to retire to what it was hoped would prove more advantageous quarters on the banks of the Guadiana. The army accordingly broke up from

Deleitosa on the 20th August, and retired without molestation by Truxillo, Medellin, and Merida, to Badajos, in which latter town headquarters were established. But the hopes of improving the condition of the troops in a sanitary point of view by this change proved eminently fallacious. The sandy plains adjacent to the Guadiana, though perfectly dry at that season, were to the last degree unhealthy; the parched soil yielded up poisonous exhalations to the ardent rays of the sun, and the intermittent fevers, which are so great a scourge in warm climates of all plains over which water has flowed, soon proved more fatal to the soldiers than the sword of the enemy had been. The hospitals were quickly crowded; and at one period nearly eight thousand, almost the half of the entire force, were on the sick list. "I consider it," says General Stewart, "as no reproach upon any officer in the service, when I here record my conviction that there was but one who did not absolutely despair at this juncture—and that one was Sir Arthur Wellesley. But Sir Arthur was far from despairing: he had already declared his conviction that, even in the event of Spain's subversion, Portugal could be defended. Into Portugal he accordingly prepared to remove, where, in comfortable cantonments, the health of his sick might be restored, and the strength of his weary and convalescents re-established."[1] This intention was carried into effect in the beginning of December, and at the same time the formidable line of intrenchments he had long projected was commenced in front of Lisbon.[2]

Aug. 20.

[1] Lond. i. 433, 434.

[2] Sir A. Wellesley's Despatch, Oct. 20, 1809; Gurwood, v. 364.

40. Return of General Stewart on leave to England.

Among the numerous victims of the pestilential climate of Estremadura in the autumnal months was General Stewart. He was seized with a severe intermittent fever in the end of September; and, after struggling with it for some weeks, the symptoms became so confirmed, that his physicians declared his life would fall a sacrifice if he did not return home. Though most reluctant to leave his revered chief even for a single week, he was compelled to

CHAP. IV. 1809.

submit; and he embarked for England accordingly on sick leave at Lisbon on the 26th October, and landed at Portsmouth on the 3d November. His health, as is generally the case with persons labouring under malaria fever, rapidly improved in the course of the voyage, and was soon re-established after his return to his own country. He was received with the utmost distinction by the Sovereign and all the members of the Government; and as he was the first officer high on Sir Arthur's staff who had returned to this country, he was able to render essential service to the cause of the Peninsula, by explaining to the Cabinet personally, and especially to his brother, Lord Castlereagh, one of the secretaries of state, the views of the English general in regard to the progress of the campaign, and his plans for the systematic defence of Portugal. The effect of these communications was very great, and they went far to dispel the gloomy anticipations which the retreat of the British army had spread in the Cabinet, as well as the country, and inspire them on solid grounds with a portion of the confidence of the Commander-in-Chief.

41. General Stewart's exposition of Sir A. Wellesley's plans.

General Stewart in these conferences represented to the Cabinet that Sir Arthur's plans for the ultimate deliverance of the Peninsula, so far from being thwarted or made hopeless by the events which had recently occurred, had only been thereby rendered more likely to be attended with ultimate success. Already, by the victory of the Douro, and the advance to Talavera, the career of conquest on the part of the enemy had been checked, and he had been compelled to relinquish his hold of part of his ill-gotten conquests. The whole north of Portugal, Galicia, Asturias, and part of Leon, had been entirely delivered—the part of the Peninsula which, from its adjoining Portugal, it was of most importance should be cleared of the enemy. The advance to Madrid was only checked by a concentration of troops from all quarters which had been attended with these results. It

is true the British army had now retired since the battle of Talavera to the Portuguese frontier, and the overthrow of Ocana would probably be followed by the invasion and occupation of Andalusia; but our chances of ultimate success in the conflict, so far from being lessened, would be materially improved by that circumstance. Being spread over the whole centre of the Peninsula from the Pyrenees to Gibraltar, the enemy would be unable to make head against the combined British and Portuguese force, which would soon be 50,000 strong, but by a similar concentration of force and a parallel abandonment of a conquered province. A second invasion of Spain, another victory like Talavera, would necessitate the evacuation of the whole provinces to the south of the Sierra Morena, as the first had done of those to the north of the Douro. If an effort were made, which was not improbable, to expel us from Portugal, the Commander-in-Chief had no fears for the result. The mountain ridges of that country, slightly improved by art, afforded positions which might be rendered unassailable by any but a very large army; and such a host would be alike unable to find in the country, or bring with them from Spain, supplies sufficient to maintain them for any length of time. Everything, therefore, depended on keeping a respectable force in Portugal, and securing a place of asylum where, provided with supplies from Lisbon in the rear, it might bid defiance to the invader, till famine and disease compelled him to retrace his steps. Such a defensive position had been already selected, and was in course of being strengthened in front of Lisbon, and he had no doubt of being able to maintain his ground there till the changes of time or another war in Germany afforded an opportunity of striking a blow with advantage in the centre of Spain.[1]

[1] Lord Castlereagh's speech, Parl. Deb. xv. 290.

Great was the effect of these able representations by Sir Charles Stewart of Sir Arthur Wellesley's views on the British Cabinet, and, coupled with what they knew of

CHAP. IV.

1810.

42. Thanks of the House of Commons to General Stewart. Feb. 5, 1810.

his distinguished services, both administrative and military, in the Cabinet and in the field, led them to propose for him, on the 2d February 1810, the distinguished honour of receiving in person the thanks of Parliament. On the 5th February, accordingly, General Stewart appeared before the House, and the Speaker (the Hon. Charles Abbot), in the eloquent language and dignified manner for which he was so celebrated, thus addressed him: "Brigadier-General Charles Stewart; amongst the gallant officers to whom this House has declared its gratitude for their distinguished services in Spain, your name has the honour to stand enrolled. During the progress of the two last campaigns in Spain and Portugal, whoever has turned his eye towards the bold and perilous operations of our armies in Leon and Galicia—whoever has contemplated the brilliant passage of the British troops across the Douro, an exploit which struck the enemy himself with admiration as well as dismay—must have remarked throughout these memorable achievements the energy and enterprise with which you have rapidly advanced in the career of military fame, and by which you have now fixed your name for ever in the annals of your country as a chief sharer in those immortal laurels won by British fortitude and valour in the hard-fought battle of Talavera. Upon the great commander under whom it was then your pride and felicity to serve, his Sovereign, this House, and the voice of an applauding empire, have conferred those signal testimonies of honour and gratitude which posterity will seal with its undoubted approbation; and it is no mean part of the merits for which you are this day to be crowned with our thanks, that you were chosen by such a commander to be the companion of his councils, and the sure hand to which he could intrust the prompt and effectual direction of his comprehensive and victorious operations.[1] To you, Sir, I am therefore now to deliver the thanks of this House; and I do, accordingly, in the name and by the command of the Commons

[1] Parl. Deb. xv. 310.

of the United Kingdom, thank you for your distinguished exertions on the 27th and 28th July, in the memorable battle of Talavera, which terminated in the signal defeat of the forces of the enemy."

Whereupon General Stewart said: "Mr Speaker, I feel myself totally inadequate to express the high sense I entertain of the distinguished honour that has been conferred upon me—an honour far exceeding any little services I may have rendered in the fortunate situation in which I have been placed. If a sentiment of regret could at such a moment arise in my mind, it would be that, from the circumstance of a severe indisposition, I stand alone here on the present occasion, the army being still on service, and that I am not accompanied by my gallant brother officers, equally members of this House, who are far more eminently entitled to its thanks, and to the applause of their country, than myself. If I sought to arrogate anything beyond the most anxious zeal for the public service, and a sincere love for the profession I belong to, it is an ardent desire to follow in the footsteps of my great and gallant commander, to whose sole abilities and exertions we stand indebted, not only for the battle of Talavera, but for all those successes which have rendered him alike an ornament to his country and a terror to her foes. To follow his bright example, to emulate his achievements, and to be thought worthy of his confidence, I shall ever consider as the surest passport to the greatest distinction that can be conferred on a soldier — I mean, the approbation of this honourable House. I must now offer my sincerest acknowledgments to you, Sir, for the very marked kindness which you have shown me, in expressing to me the thanks of this House, by condescending to enumerate my humble services in the partial manner you have done; and I beg to assure you, it will be my anxious study to avail myself of all occasions to merit the honour which has this day been conferred upon me."[1]

43. General Stewart's answer.

[1] Parl. Deb. xv. 310, 311.

CHAP. IV.

1810.

44. He is made a Knight of the Bath. Feb. 17.

After this shining proof of public esteem and gratitude, it may seem superfluous to refer to other manifestations of the same feelings even in the most exalted stations. The favour of the Sovereign, however, went along with the approbation of the country. He was created, shortly after receiving the honour, a Knight Companion of the Bath—an honour which, though it could give no additional rank to one who was "Honourable" by birth, was valuable as being a mark of military distinction, and became doubly so from being conferred at the time when his illustrious General, for the victory of Talavera, in which they both bore a part, was made Viscount Wellington.

45. Rapid rise of General Stewart, owing mainly to his ability and good conduct.

Thus did General Stewart, at the age of thirty-one—a period of life when an officer generally esteems himself fortunate if he has attained the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel—receive the thanks of the House of Commons in person, for distinguished services in the field, rendered as Adjutant-General of Sir Arthur Wellesley's army in the Peninsula. Doubtless, fortune had contributed much, with good conduct and ability, to this rapid elevation; it was not every one who was born of a noble and influential family connected with the Administration, and brother to a leading Cabinet Minister. But fortune in a free country never can do more than confer the opportunities of distinction: the capacity to seize and improve them belongs to individual ability alone. Fortune gave the opportunity on the banks of the Esla, but valour headed the charge: it was capacity, not influence, which won, at Sir Arthur Wellesley's request, for General Stewart the honourable post of Adjutant-General to the Peninsular army. But what must have been the feelings of that parent whose good fortune it was to see at once one son directing in arduous times with unswerving hand the councils of his country in foreign affairs, and another receiving the thanks of the House of Commons for the intrepid wielding of its sword in the field!

CHAPTER V.

FROM THE RETURN OF GENERAL STEWART TO THE PENINSULAR ARMY, IN MARCH 1810, TO THE EXPULSION OF THE FRENCH FROM PORTUGAL.

1. State of the Peninsula when Gen. Stewart returned to it in March 1810.

No sooner was General Stewart's health re-established in the spring of 1810, by the influence of a cooler climate and his native air, than he returned to share the toils and dangers of his chief on the Peninsular plains. Fortunately for him, the intervening period during which he had been absent had been one of comparative repose, unsignalised by one event of importance. The campaign which had just been closed had been so hard fought, its advantages so equally divided, and the difficulties on both sides of finding the means of transport or the resources necessary for active operations had been such, that neither party had been willing to renew the contest. Satisfied with having repelled the British invasion of Spain, the French generals were content to overlook their ignominious expulsion from Portugal, and submit to the reoccupation by the Spanish forces of Galicia and Asturias. They looked for brighter fields of fame, as yet untouched fields of plunder, in the beautiful provinces recently the theatre of their disgrace, to the south of the Sierra Morena. The British were so much weakened by sickness in the pestilential plains of Estremadura, and so inferior in number to the forces of the enemy when united together, that they were unable to renew active operations.[1] Taking advantage of this forced state of

[1] Sir Chas. Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, April 4, 1809, MS.; Lond. i. 449-451.

CHAP. V.

1810.

inaction, Sir Arthur Wellesley, now created Viscount Wellington of Wellington and Talavera, had removed his army from the unhealthy shores of the Guadiana, and established it, after a march of three weeks, along the frontier between the rivers Tagus and Douro, with the headquarters first at Vizeu, and afterwards at Celorico.

2. Disasters in Spain which had led to the new position taken by Wellington.

The motives which had led to this change of position on the part of the English general were not merely those founded on the necessity of a move for the health of his troops. The aspect of affairs in Spain had much to do also with the determination. Since the retreat of the British army to the banks of the Guadiana and their subsequent removal into Portugal, an unbroken series of disasters had befallen the Spanish forces in every part of the Peninsula. Saragossa in Aragon, and Gerona in Catalonia, had both fallen after sieges immortal indeed in history, but which had most seriously crippled the means of resistance at this time: the Spanish army in Estremadura had sustained a dreadful defeat at Medellin; that in La Mancha had been, as already mentioned, totally annihilated at Ocana; and the victorious French army, under Joseph and Soult, had cleared the defiles of the Sierra Morena without resistance, occupied Seville, and already commenced the blockade of Cadiz. Though the advantage was great of preserving this stronghold, yet it had been gained by an almost entire abandonment of the contest in the rest of Spain: and Wellington had already received information that three French corps, numbering 70,000 combatants, would soon assemble in the neighbourhood of Ciudad Rodrigo with a view to the siege and destruction of that fortress, previous to a serious invasion of Portugal by Almeida, through the mountainous country which separates the valley of the Douro from that of the Tagus.[1] It was to be prepared for and to meet this impending danger that Wellington moved his army during the winter from the sands of the Guadiana to the high grounds around Almeida, leaving

[1] Sir Chas. Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, April 12, 1810, MS.; Lond. i. 449, 450.

General Hill with a comparatively small force on the south of the Tagus to cover the Alentejo and keep up the communication with Badajos, which was still in the hands of the Spaniards.

3. Improved condition of the British army.

"The first good effect," says General Stewart, "resulting from this change of situation showed itself in the rapid recovery of the sick, and the no less rapid restoration to full strength of such as were already convalescent. As the troops contrived, for the most part, to obtain comfortable quarters, neither the cold of winter nor the variable temperature of the spring were felt by them. Provisions, likewise, proved abundant; and forage, if not so plentiful as could have been desired, was at least less scanty than it had been in Spain. . . . In the meanwhile, Lord Wellington was devoting a large share of his attention to the fortification and proper armament of the lines at Torres Vedras; whilst the greatest exertions were made both by him and Beresford to put the regular army and the militia of Portugal into a state of efficiency. Reinforcements accordingly came in to him every hour, respectable, not from their numbers alone, but from their discipline, till he saw himself at last at the head of 27,000 British, and full 31,000 Portuguese troops of the line. The fortress of Almeida, likewise, upon which, as well as upon Ciudad Rodrigo, much reliance was placed for baffling and retarding the advance of the French army, let it begin when it might, was put in a state of excellent defence. . . . That Ciudad Rodrigo would hold out for any length of time, no one in the present stage of affairs ventured to hope. The Spaniards were, indeed, full of protestations: they spoke of burying themselves under the ruins of the place, and rivalling the glory of Saragossa and Gerona; but as yet they were not invested."[1]

[1] Lond. i. 450-453.

The position occupied by Lord Wellington during this period of apparent inaction and real preparation was the celebrated one of Guarda, which, so long ago as the time

CHAP. V.

1810.

4. Lord Wellington's position and prospects at this time.

of Lord Galway and the war of the Succession, was deemed the most defensible and important of all which lay on the eastern frontier of Portugal, and barred the approach to the capital of an enemy from the eastward. The Allied troops (for the Portuguese regulars were now in line, and in some instances brigaded with the British) occupied the summit of the mountain-ridge called the Sierra de Estrella, extending from Coimbra to Guarda, and which gradually melts away into the immense plains of Castile. By this means they commanded and barred the two great roads which enter Portugal from Spain, the one of which runs to the north and the other to the south of the Sierra, and which are the only ones in the country on which an invading army can move its artillery and stores. The advanced posts were pushed forward much farther, and occupied positions beyond Almeida on the banks of the rivers Agueda and Coa. The right rested on the Tagus, and was protected by Hill's corps, which was posted at Abrantes and guarded the passage of that river; and the left, though undefended in a military point of view, was deemed sufficiently secure by the rugged and inhospitable nature of the country in that quarter, of which Soult's corps in the preceding year had had such bitter experience. This position, which was forty miles in length, was guarded by 27,000 British and 30,000 Portuguese troops.[1]

[1] Lond. i. 453-455.

5. Position and strength of the French forces.

Wellington's position was undoubtedly advantageous; but he had need of all its strength, for it was likely to be taxed to the uttermost by the force which Napoleon was accumulating against it. Having completed the routing and dispersion of all the Spanish armies in the field in other parts of the Peninsula, the French Emperor had now accumulated an overwhelming force to accomplish its final pacification by driving the English into the sea. It consisted of three entire corps—viz., that of Ney, composed of three divisions; that of Reynier, of two; and that of Junot, also of two. Besides these, General Kellermann had arrived in Valladolid with 9000

infantry and 2000 cavalry, and the whole were under the command of Marshal Massena, whose reputation, always great, had been raised to the highest point by his undaunted courage at the battle of Aspern. The whole army was 85,000 strong, of whom at least 68,000 might be reckoned on as present with the eagles; and the troops, deeming victory and plunder secure, were in the highest spirits and eager for the conflict. Wellington could not collect above 40,000 on any one point for active operations; and with such an inferior force he was well aware it was impossible he could hazard a battle in the open field, the more especially as fully half his men were Portuguese who had never yet been tried in a serious conflict. But he wisely remained on his mountain-ridge as near the frontier as possible; hoping that he might, by availing himself of strong positions, protract the campaign till the approach of the bad weather rendered a serious approach to the capital impossible.[1]

[1] Joseph. Mem.; Lond. i. 455-457; Koch, vii. 564-567.

6. Desponding feelings in the army.

A consciousness of this great superiority of force on the part of the enemy, as well as the disastrous termination of the war in Austria, which had been closed by the thunderbolt of Wagram, excited a very general feeling of despondence in the British troops. All were indeed resolute to do their duty to the last, and dispute every inch of ground with the enemy; but it was with a heavy heart that they looked forward to the future, and they entered on the campaign rather with the constancy of martyrs resolute to maintain their principles at the stake, than the confidence of heroes marching to assured victory. Lord Wellington, also, though he abated nothing of his confident language and demeanour, had to contend with obstacles which would have overwhelmed any ordinary man, from the extreme difficulty of getting supplies of specie to make the necessary purchases for the army. But in the midst of these anxieties, and though he did not in reality think they would be required, his provident care had provided ample shipping at Lisbon to bring

CHAP. V. 1810.

away the troops if it should become absolutely impossible to maintain his footing permanently on the Portuguese territory. Besides four sail of the line and twenty-three frigates, there lay in the Tagus transports capable of conveying away forty thousand men, with all their guns and carriages—a naval force adequate to bringing away, not only the entire British army with all its materiel, but the Portuguese also. Three concentric lines of defence, one within the other, had been constructed around Lisbon, the inmost of which, resting on the Castle of Belem and the heights overhanging the harbour, was so strong that it could be made good against any force of the enemy while the troops were embarking. In these important duties, even more of an administrative than a military kind, Lord Wellington found an invaluable coadjutor in General, now Sir Charles, Stewart, K.C.B., whose talents, like those of his illustrious chief, lay not less in the civil arrangements requisite for success in a protracted campaign, than in the conduct of troops on the field of battle.[1]

[1] Sir Chas. Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, May 28, 1810, MS.; Castlereagh Desp. ii. 274, 281, 287.

7. Siege and capture of Ciudad Rodrigo by the French.

Having at length completed his preparations, and got up his siege train, the providing of draught horses for which had been his great difficulty, Massena, at the head of two corps, commenced the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo. The sixth and eighth corps and reserve cavalry collected around Ciudad Rodrigo, alone mustered 51,562 men, of whom 10,190 were horse, besides 5943 horses and 1900 carriages for the artillery and baggage.[2]* The second corps, under Reynier, which also was under

[2] Koch, vii. 567; Marm. iv. 20.

* Wellington's information was nearly the same, viz.:—

Sixth corps, ...	31,611
Eighth corps, ...	25,956
Total, . . .	57,567

of whom 9572 were horse.—GURWOOD, vi. 248.

The number of men stated in the text is taken from the field state of Massena's army for the 30th June 1810, published by Koch in his able life of Massena. Marmont, in his *Memoires*, makes them 59,665. But this seems to be owing to his giving the effectives, while Koch gives only those present under arms. Compare KOCH, vii. 567, with MARMONT, iv. 20.

Massena's orders, was 16,000 strong, and was on the south of the Tagus, threatening Badajos and Hill's corps, which covered the Alentejo. Besides these, Serras's division, 10,000 strong, in Leon, observed the province Entre Douro e Minho, and effectually prevented any succour being sent from that quarter to the menaced points at Guarda. The main French army, 52,000 strong, took up a position in front of Ciudad Rodrigo, to cover the siege. The place had been invested since the middle of April; and ground was broken before it, and the siege commenced in earnest, in the beginning of June. Opinions at this juncture were much divided in the British army as to whether an attempt should be made to raise the siege. On the one hand, it was a painful thing to see a fortress, garrisoned by 6000 brave men, who made a most gallant defence, taken, as it were, under the eyes of a powerful army, which recently had gained a glorious victory; and such a calamity, if occurring, could not fail seriously to weaken the confidence now generally felt in British prowess and perseverance throughout the Peninsula. On the other hand, the covering force was nearly a half more than any body by which Lord Wellington could assail it, and it was a homogeneous force, admirably disciplined and equipped; whereas, of the Allied troops one half were Portuguese, but recently raised. Above all, the British force was the *only one* in the Peninsula capable of at all making head against the enemy, and defeat would necessarily draw after it total ruin to the Allied cause; whereas the French army, great as it was, could only be regarded as the advanced-guard of an armed host four times as numerous, ready to repair disaster. Influenced by these considerations, and especially the last, Wellington, after much deliberation, and with a heavy heart, resolved to leave Ciudad Rodrigo to its fate. He remained firm accordingly in the position of Guarda, with the headquarters at Alverca;[1] and the Spanish fortress, seeing no prospect of relief, capitulated,

June 5.

[1] Sir Chas. Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, July 14, 1809, MS.; Lond. i. 464-480; Wellington to Lord Liverpool, July 11, 1810; Gurw. vi. 217.

CHAP. V.

1810.

after a noble defence, and enduring a month of open trenches, on the 10th July.

8. Unsuccessful skirmish of advanced posts. July 11.

In common with nearly all the officers of the army, Sir Charles Stewart had deeply regretted the inactivity of our army during this siege; and there were not awanting those who affirmed, that the caution of our Commander-in-Chief had needlessly sacrificed a brave garrison and important fortress, and tarnished the honour of the British arms. But an event soon occurred which demonstrated that Wellington was right, and that a more daring course might, without any adequate gain, endanger the whole objects of the war. On the morning after Ciudad Rodrigo fell, General Craufurd, with 600 light horse, made an attempt to cut off 200 of the enemy's infantry, and 30 horse, who were lying in advance of the other outposts. The cavalry were quickly put to flight; but though the hussars, led by Colonel Talbot of the 14th, rode bravely up to the very muzzles of the enemy's muskets, they were unable to make any impression on the infantry, and the little party of the French got off without loss, while, on the side of the British, Colonel Talbot and six other men were killed, and twenty-two wounded. In this little affair the French, in Wellington's words, "behaved with the utmost gallantry;" and it was only by the hussars of the German Legion coming out of Barquilla being taken for the enemy, that another charge, which probably would have proved successful, was prevented from taking place. As it was, this untoward incident, though bitterly regretted at the time, had in the end a beneficial effect, by showing the troops the quality of the enemy with whom they had to deal, and the risk with which any advance into the open country round Ciudad Rodrigo would have been attended, especially considering the greatly superior force of the enemy's cavalry.[1]

[1] Wellington to Lord Liverpool, July 13, 1810; Gurw. vi. 253; Lond. i. 482, 483.

After the fall of Ciudad Rodrigo the enemy remained for ten days quiet, making their final preparations for the invasion of Portugal; and on the 21st, all things being

in readiness, they moved forward. The advanced-guard, consisting of 10,000 infantry, 2500 horse, and 40 guns, pushed on in the direction of Almeida, which was evidently the next object of attack. General Craufurd, a gallant and experienced soldier, but somewhat too fond of fighting, who commanded the light division, and had the direction of the advanced posts, had received positive orders not to fight in advance of the Coa; but when the enemy approached he could only prevail on himself to retire slowly, and contesting every defensible position, in order to retard their advance as much as possible. This brought on a smart action between the French advanced-guard and the light division on the 24th July. "The skirmish," says Sir Charles Stewart, who witnessed it, "was the more interesting, as it is impossible to conceive any piece of ground better adapted for a rencontre of the kind—an extensive plain, intersected continually by hedges, stone walls, and enclosures, stretching all the way from Villamula to the Coa; and it was through this that our soldiers fell back, retaining with obstinacy each successive fence, till the superior numbers of the enemy compelled them to abandon it. During the continuance of this skirmish, the French cavalry made more than one attempt to cut off portions of the British infantry, and they were not always unsuccessful. . . . The skirmishers being now driven in, the French prepared to follow up their successes by vigorously assaulting Craufurd's position. They bore down with a dense column upon his centre, where the 95th, with two Portuguese regiments, were posted; and, in spite of a desperate resistance, particularly from the 95th and one of the foreign battalions, pierced it. By this time our cavalry had withdrawn to the opposite side of the Coa, and, our infantry being in some disorder, affairs assumed rather an unpromising aspect: Craufurd accordingly determined upon a retreat; but it was undertaken under trying and ticklish circumstances, and it was not executed without a heavy loss both in killed and prisoners.

9. Severe fight with Craufurd's division. May 24.

CHAP. V. 1810.

The only route open to General Craufurd's division was by a bridge across the stream, which, as it lay upon a level considerably beneath the ground now occupied by the enemy, was unavoidably exposed to a heavy fire from most of their guns. Thither, however, it was necessary to proceed; and thither regiment after regiment was moved, covered in succession by the corps in the rear, and last of all by a body of skirmishers. The French made several brave attempts to force the bridge; they charged towards it repeatedly as our people were descending, and endeavoured to push a body of their cavalry across in our rear; but, the opposite bank rising abruptly, and being covered both with artillery and infantry, they were on each occasion stopped. At length the firing ceased; and Craufurd, having halted on his new ground till evening, retreated under cover of the darkness to a position within four leagues of Alverca."[1]

[1] Lond. i. 495, 496; Wellington to Henry Wellesley, July 27, 1810; Gur. vi. 288.

10. Results of the combat, and siege of Almeida.

Though the steadiness of the troops engaged in this combat excited the admiration of all who witnessed it, yet was it an event much to be regretted, for it cost the lives of 4 officers and 28 men killed, and 25 officers and 218 men wounded—a proportion of 1 to 7, most unusual in modern war,* and which too clearly proved how nobly the British officers had exposed themselves to bring off their men. It illustrated the wisdom of Wellington's orders not to fight in advance of the Coa, and the great hazard of fighting at all, where it was possible to avoid it, with a river to cross by a single bridge, or a free passage only in the rear. Had the men engaged been less steady, the retreat less orderly, beyond all doubt the greater part of Craufurd's division would have been taken or destroyed. As it was, Wellington deemed the superiority of the enemy in numbers, and especially in cavalry, too decided to hazard a general action, even to save Almeida, and he accordingly resolved to retire to a position of great strength, and more

* 1 to 25 is the usual proportion in the British, 1 to 30 in the French, 1 to 35 in the Russian army.

contracted, on which he had long had his eye, some leagues in the rear, with the headquarters at Celorico. Thither, accordingly, the army retreated, without being at all disquieted by the enemy, who, to the great surprise of all in the British army, remained inactive, and to appearance undecided what to do, for several weeks. Almeida, which was uncovered by the retrograde movement, was meanwhile invested, but the active operations of the siege were not commenced. The real reason of this delay, however, is now known. Massena, seeing the strength of the force by which he was to be opposed, was desirous of being reinforced by Reynier's corps from Estremadura, whose place was to be supplied in that province by Mortier's corps from Seville. Joseph and Soult had opposed this, as endangering their recent and important conquests in Andalusia. The dispute was referred to Paris; and the Emperor, seeing that the vital point of the contest lay in Portugal, gave his decision in favour of Massena. Reynier's corps accordingly joined Massena, while Mortier's broke up from Seville, and came up to Estremadura to watch Hill, who was in the neighbourhood of Elvas, and threaten the Alentejo.[1]

[1] Napoleon to Berthier, May 27, 1810; Joseph's Mem. vii. 283; Lond. i. 503.

11. Siege and fall of Almeida.

No sooner did Reynier's corps, 16,000 strong, cross the Tagus to join the invading army under Massena, than the indecision of the French movements ceased. On the 14th of August they sat down before Almeida, the reduction of which was a necessary prelude to further operations; and on the 25th, the first batteries were armed, but they were at such a distance as only to reach the outworks of the place. The fortress, which was of great strength, and amply provided, was garrisoned by two regiments of Portuguese militia and one of the line, under Brigadier-General Cox, an officer upon whose steadiness entire reliance could be placed. As it was much stronger than Ciudad Rodrigo, a still more prolonged resistance was anticipated than the gallant one which that comparatively weak fortress had made; and it was on this that Wellington's main reliance

CHAP. V. 1810.

was placed, because, if the place could hold out for a few weeks, the heavy rains of autumn would set in, and further movements in the field, on the part of the investing army, would be rendered impossible. To encourage the defence, and, if an opportunity should present itself, either interrupt the siege, or throw in some succour to the beleaguered garrison, he moved forward to the ground he had previously occupied, and approached close to the outposts of the besieging army. But the hopes which he entertained of a prolonged defence were disappointed. On the evening of the 26th, when the enemy were throwing shells, still at very long range, into the fortress, one of them blew up the principal magazine of the place. This was a serious misfortune, for nearly all the guns were blown into the ditch, and great part of the artillerymen killed or wounded; but the garrison might still have prolonged the defence some time longer; and subsequent events showed that, whether it had occurred or not, they would have capitulated, and were already in terms with the French general. No sooner had the explosion taken place, than the whole officers in the place, with the Portuguese second in command at their head, waited on General Cox, and insisted on his instantly surrendering. Cox, like a gallant soldier, refused, adding his resolution, if matters became desperate, to cut his way through the French lines, and join Lord Wellington. The officers remonstrated, and withdrew in sullen discontent; but Cox found, on going out to the troops, that matters had become hopeless; for they had already all laid down their arms, and not a man would obey his orders. Cox had now no alternative but to close with the French general's offer of a capitulation, and next day he formally surrendered. Massena entered the town immediately, and the treachery was then made manifest.[1] The garrison being paraded before him, he dismissed the militia to their homes, on a promise they would not serve against the French during the war, and offered the regular soldiers service under the banners of Napoleon. They all accepted

[1] Sir Chas. Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, Aug. 30, 1810, MS.; Lond. i. 508-510; Wellington to Lord Liverpool, Aug. 29, 1810, and to General Hill, Sept. 1, 1810; Gurw. vi. 389-399.

the offer, and were immediately enrolled in the French legions; while the commander of artillery, who informed Massena of the state of the place, was made a colonel by that general.

12. Gloomy aspect of affairs in the British army.

The sudden and unexpected fall of Almeida, especially when accompanied by such grave indications of treachery on the part of the Portuguese garrison, was a most serious misfortune, and embarrassed the English general to a degree which he had never yet experienced since the beginning of the war. Not only was the frontier fortress, on which he had relied to retard the enemy till the autumnal rains set in, lost, and its artillery and provisions, which were very extensive, placed at Massena's disposal, but the circumstances attending the capitulation were such as to shake the confidence hitherto placed in the Portuguese troops. The most desponding views, in consequence, came to pervade the British army, and from it the gloom spread rapidly to the Government and the press at home. The Spanish armies were all defeated and dispersed; a hopeless resistance was only maintained in detached mountains and fortresses, rather from the characteristic obstinacy of the nation than from any expectation of ultimate success. The French armies in the Peninsula amounted to 250,000 men present with the eagles; and of this immense force, one-fourth, or 60,000, were concentrated for the immediate invasion of Portugal. The entire troops at the disposal of Wellington were little more than 50,000, and one-half of these were at a distance, under Leith and Hill, at Thomar and on the Tagus; so that not more than 28,000 could be concentrated in a single field to give battle to the enemy, who could bring at least 60,000 in a mass against him. The disproportion was too great to risk a general battle, unless in a very strong position and under the most favourable circumstances, and amply sufficient to spread the most desponding views as to the ultimate issue of the campaign throughout the Allied army.[1]

[1] Lond. i. 516.

CHAP. V.

1810.

13. Political difficulties of Wellington's situation.

It added much to the difficulties of Wellington at this critical juncture, that Lord Castlereagh, who hitherto had been his firmest support in the Cabinet, was no longer a member of the Government, in consequence of his unfortunate rupture and duel with Mr Canning, already noticed; and the General-in-Chief's correspondence was in consequence carried on with Lord Liverpool. It is no impeachment of the firmness and patriotism of that eminent and judicious statesman to say, that he and his colleagues at that time shared those desponding views, and that they had come to regard the attempt to defend Portugal as visionary. Judging by past experience, and at a distance from the scene of action, there can be no doubt that those opinions were well founded, and such as any rational man, forming his judgment upon the information which they possessed, would have adopted. Without, therefore, actually forbidding the attempt to defend Portugal, they contented themselves with throwing all responsibility connected with it on the general, and urging upon him the necessity, as his primary object, of looking to the safety of the British army intrusted to his keeping, and the means of bringing it off safe to England in case of disaster.* The Portuguese Government, at best weak and timorous, was still less to be relied on; and the chief object they seemed to have was, to thwart every proposal for the common cause which came from the English general. In these arduous circumstances, threatened by a powerful enemy double his own strength in front, and with a desponding

* "Lord Wellington found himself at this critical juncture beset with many other difficulties besides those which originated in the insufficiency of his own force and the tremendous superiority of the enemy. All responsibility was thrown upon him. The instructions which he received were generally so expressed as to leave him ground for doubt respecting the course which would be most agreeable to his employers; whilst hints are thrown out, that he ought to look above all things to the preservation of the forces intrusted to him. In few words, the Ministers were alarmed at the crisis to which affairs had arrived, and their conduct partook of their fears. Nor was the Government of Portugal to be depended upon; and a thousand impediments were thrown in the way of every useful suggestion, provided it happened to come from the English general or his friends."—LONDONDERRY'S *Peninsular War*, i. 505, 506.

Government and lukewarm ally in rear, it was fortunate for Wellington that he possessed in the Adjutant-General of his army, Sir Charles Stewart, a counsellor and friend, who, sharing his inmost thoughts, and inspired with equal firmness, brought to his aid the resources of administrative talents of the highest kind, and a degree of energy which proved equal to the serious emergency which had arisen.

14. Massena, by Napoleon's positive orders, invades Portugal.

Napoleon meanwhile incessantly urged Massena to commence the invasion of Portugal forthwith and in good earnest; the harvest having now been cut down, and the season arrived when he deemed it practicable to make the attempt, without incurring any serious risk as to provisions. In pursuance of these orders, that Marshal at length broke up from Almeida and advanced into Portugal, though by a different route from that which Lord Wellington supposed he would have taken; while the latter retired before him leisurely and in the best order, driving the cattle, and carrying off, so far as possible, all the provisions in the country through which he retired. Reynier, with his entire corps, moved down the valley of the Mondego on the Ponte de Murcella, which was the point of rendezvous assigned by Wellington to his troops, and where he designed, if practicable, to give battle, with a view to stop his further advance. Junot and Ney's corps marched in parallel columns to the right; the former by the hill-road from San Felices through Trancoso—the latter by Celorico, and across the Mondego upon Vizeu. His object in following this course was to turn the position of Ponte de Murcella, which was eminently favourable for a lesser force engaging a greater. No sooner did Wellington learn that he was marching upon this line, which abandoned all co-operation with the troops in Estremadura, threatening the Alentejo, than he marched upon Cortico, near Ponte de Murcella, intending to give battle there. It was evident to all the army, from this movement, that the British general had no intention of abandoning Portugal

CHAP. V. 1810.

without a struggle, and that he was only looking about for some ground where he might meet the enemy on something like equal terms, and neutralise his superiority, especially in cavalry, which had hitherto rendered any conflict in the level country so hazardous.[1]

[1] Lond. i. 516-519.

15. Approach of both armies to Busaco. Sept. 25.

This advantageous ground ere long presented itself, even sooner than was generally anticipated. The three French corps, which had hitherto advanced in three separate columns between the Mondego and the Douro, now united together and moved in one immense mass along the road to Vizeu, on the right bank of the Mondego; thus turning the position of Ponte de Murcella. This road was execrable, insomuch that it was reckoned in the British army altogether impassable for artillery and wheel-carriages. Accustomed, however, to make all physical difficulties yield to energetic determination and an iron will, the French troops pushed on upon this line, with all their enormous train of carriages, without intermission, and so densely massed together as to defy all annoyance or attack. As Reynier was united with the main body, the entire army, 60,000 strong, was approaching. The badness of the roads, however, compelled them to halt four days at Vicize to repair the damage done to the artillery. Lord Wellington instantly took advantage of this delay to move his whole army across the Mondego; while Hill's and Leith's corps were also moved to the same river, where they arrived on the same day. The whole force, 50,000 strong, were, by these flank movements, concentrated on the position of BUSACO, barring the direct road to Lisbon—a field which became the theatre of a battle so important, that a description of the ground must be given in Sir Charles Stewart's own words.[2]

Sept. 25.

Sept. 26.

[2] Lond. ii. 1-3; Joseph's Mem. vii. 174; Wellington to Lord Liverpool, Sept. 30, 1810; Gurw. vi. 444.

16. Description of the position of Busaco.

"The position of Busaco consists of one huge mountain, which extends from the edge of the Mondego to the great Oporto road, and supports upon its summit the convent of Busaco, inhabited by monks of the order of

La Trappe. It measures nearly sixteen miles in width from the right, where it eases itself off by gradual falls towards the Mondego to the left, where it ends in a variety of tongues of land, each as lofty, craggy, and rugged as itself. It is covered in front by gorges of indescribable depth, and defiles barely passable for sheep. The principal inconvenience attending it as fighting ground for our army arose out of its extent; for it was manifestly too capacious to be occupied aright by 60,000 men." It was, however, liable to be turned on the British left by the Mealhada road, and every one expected to see the efforts of the enemy made in that quarter. "Strange to say, however, Marshal Massena made no effort of the kind. On the contrary, he led his columns through the passes above described, and up the face of heights approximating very nearly to the perpendicular, and thus devoted them to destruction, from the hands of men posted, as has been already mentioned, on their summits." Wellington gave orders that no affairs of advanced posts should take place, and that the outposts in the plain below should retire to the foot of the mountain, and then up its sides, as the enemy approached; being desirous that they should come upon the whole strength of the Allied army unexpectedly and at once in a situation where the immense superiority of their cavalry could be of no avail. In obedience to these orders the advanced posts retired, but in the finest order, skirmishing and firing as they withdrew. While doing so, Lieutenant Hoey, aide-de-camp to Sir Charles Stewart—who, always in the post of danger, was with the rearguard—was killed at his General's side by a cannon-shot. Meanwhile Hill and Leith were in full march over the Mondego, and by daybreak on the 27th the whole stood in battle array on the summit of the mountain. Hill's division stood on the extreme right, on the summit of the slopes shelving down to the Mondego;[1] next Leith's corps, then Picton with the third division, then Spencer

[1] Lond. ii. 3-6; Wellington to Lord Liverpool, Sept. 30, 1810; Gurw. vi. 444.

CHAP. V. 1810.

with the first, then Craufurd with the light division, and, on the extreme left, Cole with the fourth. The cavalry were massed together in the plains in front of Mealhada, where alone they had ground on which they could act, and the artillery were placed on all advantageous spots along the line on the top of the ridge, so as to command the debouches from the glens on the rugged summits.

17. Massena is goaded on to attack.

Massena was too experienced a general not to see the danger of attacking a powerful army in such a position, especially when the approaches to it were such that neither cavalry nor artillery could be brought up to the conflict till the gorges were won; but he was goaded on to the conflict by the clamour of the generals and officers around him, who, ignorant of the quality of the troops with whom they had to deal, demanded, with loud cries, to be led to the assault. General Pelet, who was Massena's first aide-de-camp, affirms that Ney wrote to the Commander-in-Chief to the effect that, if he was in his place he would overwhelm the English, but that, in the circumstances, he would counsel a retreat to the Agueda.[1] This bitter irony determined the General, and orders were given for the attack on the day following at daybreak. The truth was, Ney was as well aware as Massena of the hazard of an attack on Wellington's army in such a position; but he was as yet ignorant of the quality of British troops; and, well knowing the impetuosity of the Emperor, and what he expected from the armies of Portugal, he deemed it indispensable to make the attempt.[2]

1 Massena's Mem. vii. 192.

2 Joseph's Mem. vii. 175.

18. Battle of Busaco. Sept. 27.

At six on the morning of the 27th the French troops commenced the attack, and they did so with a gallantry which drew forth rounds of hearty applause from their enemies, as well as their friends. Ney, with three divisions, mustering 23,000 combatants, advanced against the British left by the great road leading to the convent of Busaco, guarded by the light division; Reynier with two divisions, 15,000 strong, moved against their right, and came up a wooded ravine, at the head of which

stood Picton's men. Both attacks were made with great spirit; but the latter, which was led by three of the most distinguished regiments in the French service, the 32d, 36th, and 70th, under General Merle, was the one chiefly relied on. They pushed forward with such vigour, driving the British and Portuguese skirmishers before them, that they not only gained the summit of the gorge, but deployed in good order on the summit. The danger was imminent; for, had the French been supported, they might have maintained themselves on the ground they had won, and, by breaking through the Allied line of defence, possibly gained the day. But fortunately they were not supported; and meanwhile the 45th British and 8th Portuguese met them with a bravery equal to their own, and stood their ground with undaunted valour. Ere long the 88th came up; and the gallant Irish, with loud shouts, charged and drove the enemy headlong over rocks and cliffs down the descent.[1]

[1] Massena's Mem. vii. 194-197; Lord Wellington to Lord Liverpool, Sept. 30, 1810; Gurw. vi. 447-450; Lond. ii. 7, 8.

19. Defeat of the attack on the British left.

The other attack, under Ney in person, directed against the British left, met with no better success. The column, headed by Loison's division, rapidly advanced up the road in the wooded hollow, which leads direct to Busaco; and the British sharpshooters, driven before them, soon issued forth on the crest, breathless with the steep ascent, and in disorder. Craufurd, who was there with his division, had placed his artillery most advantageously, so as to play upon the enemy during their progress up the hollow; and his guns, to which they had none to reply, played upon them with very great effect. Nothing, however, could stop the upward advance of the French troops, and they emerged breathless, but in good order, on the summit. But Craufurd stood there with the 43d, 52d, and 95th, in line; they lay concealed in a hollow till the enemy were within a hundred yards; and then, springing up and advancing a few steps, threw in a slow deliberate running fire from right to left along the whole line, which made fearful chasms in

CHAP. V.

1810.

the ranks of the enemy. No sooner was this volley delivered than the whole, with a loud and simultaneous cheer, rushed forward with the bayonet—Sir Charles Stewart, with the commanders of the regiments, leading. "The enemy," says Sir Charles Stewart, "unable to retreat, and afraid to resist, were rolled down the steep like a torrent of hailstones driven before a powerful wind; and not the bayonets only, but the very hands of some of our brave fellows, became in an instant red with the blood of the fugitives. More brilliant or more decisive charges than those executed this day by the two divisions which bore the brunt of the action, were never perhaps witnessed; nor could anything equal the gallantry and intrepidity of our men throughout, except perhaps the hardihood which had ventured upon so desperate an attack." After this second repulse, the enemy, at all points, retreated into the plain at the foot of the mountain, and the British and Portuguese remained in undisturbed possession of its summit.[1]

[1] Lond. ii. 8, 9; Lord Wellington to Lord Liverpool, Sept. 30, 1810; Gurw. vi. 446, 447; Massena's Mem. vii. 194-197.

20. Results of the battle on both sides.

The loss of the French in killed and wounded in this battle, by their own admission, was 4486 men, and 223 generals or officers, including Generals Merle, Foy, and Maucunne.[2] This loss, now ascertained from the official sources, was nearly as large as what Wellington, in his official despatch, estimated—viz., at 1800 killed and 3000 wounded; while that of the Allies was only 1300. This disproportion arose from the great disadvantages under which the French laboured in making the attack, and the murderous effect of the fire of the British *in line* upon the dense masses of the French in column. But great as was this advantage, it was as nothing to the moral effect of the defeat upon the two armies. This cannot be given better than in the words of the Duke of Wellington on one side, and General Koch, the able biographer of Massena, on the other. "This movement," said the former, in his official despatch announcing the battle, "has afforded me a favourable opportunity of showing the enemy the descrip-

[2] Massena's Mem. vii. 199, 200.

tion of troops of which this army is composed. It has brought the Portuguese levies into action with the enemy for the first time in an advantageous situation; and they have proved that the trouble which has been taken with them has not been thrown away, and that they are worthy of contending in the same ranks with British troops in this interesting cause, which they afford the best hopes of saving." While mutual confidence and cordial co-operation were thus established between the British and Portuguese, disunion and acrimony, the usual attendants on bad success, broke out in the French ranks. "This check," says General Koch, "in the outset of the campaign, surprised our troops without diminishing their courage; but it developed the seeds of the division which existed between the General-in-Chief and his lieutenants. The former complained of the little vigour displayed by the Duke of Elchingen (Ney) in his attack, his inattention to the orders he had received, and of the faulty direction given to the column of Marchand. The Duke maintained that he had done the best he could, or was possible, in the circumstances; and he allowed his ill-humour to exhale in insulting expressions and ill-founded accusations. Those who blamed the battle, as well as those who found themselves its victims, were never wearied of repeating envious criticisms, the echo of which has been prolonged even to our day. Nevertheless, the evil was not so great as it might have become; and the two armies maintained the positions they had held before the fight, like two fatigued athletes who take breath before the final struggle." [1]

[1] Wellington to Lord Liverpool, Sept. 30, 1810; Gurw. vi. 449; Koch, Mem. de Massena, vii. 200.

21. Great service of Sir Charles Stewart in this battle.

In this glorious and most important battle Sir Charles Stewart was actively engaged, and rendered the most important service to the Commander-in-Chief. Wellington said in his despatch: "I have throughout received the greatest assistance from the general and staff officers. I am particularly indebted to the adjutant and the quarter-master-generals." The former of these officers was, liter-

CHAP. V. 1810.

ally speaking and in every sense, his "adjutant" during the whole engagement. Ever on horseback beside his chief, he flew to the menaced points to carry out his instructions, and encouraged the troops wherever the danger was greatest, and in this way he was with their respective generals, at the head both of Craufurd's and Leith's divisions when they repulsed, by their glorious charges, the formidable attacks of Loison and Merle. The great services rendered by his courage and energy on these trying occasions served strongly to cement the cordial friendship which grew up between him and Lord Wellington, by whom, both in conversation and correspondence, he was constantly called "Charles."

22. Massena turns the British position.

Although the battle of Busaco, in its final results, was one of the most important ever fought in any age by the British troops, yet its immediate consequences were far from being equally satisfactory. Hurled down, indeed, from the summit of the ridge with heavy loss, the French general abandoned all thoughts of a fresh attack, but he sent out scouts in every direction to see whether the formidable position could not be turned. In this he proved

Sept. 28.

successful. At noon on the following day, a peasant brought information to the French headquarters that there was a road practicable for artillery from Mortagoa to Boialva, over the Sierra de Caramula, on the extreme French right, by which the army with all its carriages might pass over and get into the great road from Oporto to Coimbra, and thus entirely turn the British position. To attempt to do so was a hazardous operation, for it exposed the flank of the army, in long and straggling array, encumbered by several thousand waggons and all its sick and artillery, to an attack from a powerful and wary adversary, from whose position, on the mountains above, the whole movement would necessarily become visible. But between incurring that hazard, and a retreat either to the Agueda and Ciudad Rodrigo, or Oporto, there was no alternative; and the knowledge which Massena had of

the violence of Napoleon's temper, and the confident expectations he had formed of decisive success from the invasion of Portugal, forbade all thoughts of a retrograde movement, except in the very last extremity. He resolved, therefore, to run the risk, and sent forward immediately two regiments of horse to occupy the summit of the Sierra. When they reached it a magnificent view opened on their astonished eyes of rich plains, hanging orchards and vineyards, sparkling streams, and a splendid champaign country, extending from the foot of the mountain to Coimbra. Overjoyed at this discovery, Massena despatched Junot with two divisions at nightfall, to occupy the pass in force; and at break of day Ney was to march with his entire corps, to be immediately followed by the whole army.[1]

[1] Koch, vii. 201, 202.

23. Wellington retires to Torres Vedras.

Wellington has frequently said that he expected the battle of Busaco would have stopped the advance of the French into Portugal, and that, if their general had been directed by the true principles of the military art, he would have retired after that check.[2] Influenced by this belief, and supposing that the pass on his left, over which Massena was preparing to move, was impassable for an army, he did not occupy it; and when, on the evening of the 28th, he saw the French army defiling in that direction, he wisely made no attempt to disturb them, but gave orders for the whole force to break up and retire by Coimbra towards Lisbon. His policy was now to leave nothing to chance. Behind him were the lines of Torres Vedras, now completed, and mounted with six hundred guns. He withdrew, therefore, rapidly towards this stronghold, driving the whole corn and cattle of the country as he retired, accompanied by nearly the whole inhabitants; and at the same time he wrote to the Marquis de la Romana to come across from Estremadura and join him there, which that gallant officer immediately did with 4000 men.[3] It was a joyful day for the Spanish troops when they entered Portugal, for they immediately

[2] Gurw. vi. 553.

[3] Wellington to Romana, Sept. 30, 1810; Gurw. vi. 450; Lond. ii. 11, 12; Belmas, i. 132.

CHAP. V. 1810.

received the same rations as the British—viz., a pound of bread, a pound and a half of biscuit, and a pound of meat a-day: a wonderful change to men who, however inured to abstemious habits, had previously been literally starving.

24. Horrors of the retreat.

There can be no doubt that this retreat, and the order to the Portuguese to evacuate their houses and retire with the army before the French approached, was absolutely necessary, and largely contributed to the ultimate success of the campaign; but, in the first instance, it led to very great confusion and suffering, and excited the warmest feelings of commiseration in the British officers and soldiers who witnessed it. Sir Charles Stewart has left the following graphic picture of it and its attendant horrors: "Crowds of men, women, and children—of the sick, the aged, and the infirm, as well as of the robust and the young—covered the roads and the fields in every direction. Mothers might be seen with infants at their breasts hurrying towards the capital, and weeping as they went; old men, scarcely able to totter along, made way chiefly by the aid of their sons and daughters; whilst the whole wayside soon became strewed with bedding, blankets, and other species of household furniture, which the weary fugitives were unable to carry farther. During the retreat of Sir John Moore's army numerous heartrending scenes were brought before us; for then, as now, the people, particularly in Galicia, fled at our approach; but they all returned sooner or later to their homes, nor ever dreamed of accumulating upon our line of march, or following our fortunes. The case was different here. Those who forsook their dwellings, forsook them under the persuasion that they should never behold them again; and the agony which such an apprehension appeared to excite among the majority exceeds any attempt at description. . . . It could not but occur to us that, though the devastating system must inevitably bear hard upon the French, the most serious evils would, in

all probability, arise out of it, both to ourselves and our allies, from the famine and general distress which it threatened to bring upon a crowd so dense, shut up within the walls of a single city. At the moment there were few amongst us who seemed not disposed to view it with reprobation; because, whilst they condemned its apparent violation of every feeling of humanity and justice, they doubted the soundness of the policy in which it originated." [1]

[1] Lond. ii. 12, 13.

25. Sir Charles Stewart's description of the lines of Torres Vedras.

Driving this agitated and weeping crowd before them, the British army, under its indomitable chief, now approached the lines of Torres Vedras—the chosen stronghold and battle-field on which the fate, not of Lisbon itself, but of the Peninsula, was to be decided. Sir Charles Stewart, who rode along its entire extent almost every day for the next two months, has given the following account of these celebrated lines: "Along the neck of the peninsula, at the extremity of which Lisbon is built, there extend several ranges of high and rugged hills, intersected here and there by narrow passes, and covered for the most part by deep ravines and defiles, in the usual acceptation of the term impassable. Along this, at the distance of perhaps twenty-five English miles from the city, Lord Wellington had selected two lines, one considerably in advance of the other, but both of tremendous strength; and he had bestowed upon their fortification so much of care, and diligence, and science, as to place them almost equally beyond the reach of insult from any assailing force, however numerous and well supplied. The system pursued on this occasion was quite novel, and the works erected were altogether such as were not to be met with, under similar circumstances, in any part of the world.

26. Description of the first line.

"The first line rested its right upon the acclivities of Alhandra, on the summits of which several formidable redoubts were erected, and was flanked by the fire of a dozen gunboats at anchor in the Tagus. The faces of these

CHAP. V. 1810.

hills were all carefully scarped; the road which led through them was destroyed; and it was with perfect justice concluded that here at least our position might be pronounced impregnable. On the left of these heights lay a ravine or gully, called the Pass of Maltao, the gorge of which was effectually blocked up by two formidable redoubts, whilst it was completely commanded on one hand by the hills of Alhandra, and on the other by those of Armeda. The latter, like the former, were scarped, and otherwise rendered inaccessible; and they communicated with the centre of the position, which was a huge mountain, crowned by a redoubt more extensive than any other on the line. As this mountain overhung the village of Sobral, its castle kept completely at command the great road which conducts from thence to Lisbon, and rendered it utterly hopeless for any body of men so much as to attempt a passage in that direction. On the left of this redoubt, again, some high and broken ground looked down upon Zebreira, and stretched, in formidable shape, towards Pataneira. Just behind that village there is a deep glen, succeeded by other hills, which cover the roads from Ribaldeira to Exara and Lisbon; whilst, on the left of the whole, was a lofty mountain, which crowded up all the space between these roads and Torres Vedras." The works ended at the extreme left at the mouth of the Zezambre, on the sea, distant twenty-five miles from the other extremity on the Tagus. "Along this line were erected, at convenient distances, no fewer than one hundred and eight redoubts, differing in dimensions according to the extent of the ground allotted for them and the purposes which they were severally intended to serve; and the whole were armed with a train of four hundred and twenty pieces of ordnance of the heaviest calibre." In addition to this, the ascents, by nature, were all steep, arid, and rocky.[1] Sloping vineyards for the most part covered the front; and wherever these obstacles were awanting, strong palisades were erected, ditches cut, and

[1] Lond. ii. 15-17, and i. 485.

slopes scarped, so as to impede to the greatest degree the advance of an attacking army.

Notwithstanding all this, these lines, though among the strongest which combined nature and art had ever formed, were not without their weak points, which Sir Charles Stewart observed, and anxiously pointed out to the Commander-in-Chief. They were thus explained by himself at the time in a letter to his brother: "In some places the redoubts have been unavoidably placed at such considerable intervals from each other, that, should there be no powerful reserves at hand, and movable columns to block up the chasms, the enemy might, without much difficulty, and with little loss, penetrate between them. This is particularly the case at the extremities, in the space between Mafra and the sea on the left, and between Torres Vedras and the Tagus on the right; and unfortunately they are precisely the places where an attack is most likely to be made. The centre is completely covered by the great redoubt on Monte Junto, and the works ramifying from it on either side; but the flanks are not equally covered, and if assailed must depend upon the valour of those who occupy them."[1] To obviate as much as possible this danger, Wellington had constructed a fine road, which ran along the position behind the lines over its whole extent, so as to afford the means of moving troops or artillery rapidly from one part to another; and a line of signals was erected so as to give instant information to headquarters of any attack which might be made in any quarter. Still, with all these precautions, the Commander-in-Chief was not without uneasiness as to the effect of a sudden attack in great force on one part of a line of such extent. The outposts were pushed far into the plain towards the French videttes; the utmost vigilance was enjoined on all the guards and sentinels: and the General himself rode almost every day along the whole line, accompanied by his staff, to inspect in person every part of the preparations.[2]

Weak points of the line.

[1] Sir Charles Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, Oct. 10, 1810, MS.

[2] Lond. i. 486, 487; Koch, vii. 229-231.

CHAP. V.

1810. 28.

Massena resolves to blockade the lines only.

Slowly following the retreating army, without giving it any serious molestation, Massena at length approached these stupendous lines. They took the French entirely by surprise, for they had heard only a vague rumour before that some earthworks had been thrown up in front of Lisbon, but of their magnitude or strength they had not formed a conception. After carefully reconnoitring them along their whole extent, the French general formed a decided opinion that it was hopeless to attempt to carry them by storm. The army had been considerably weakened by the effects of disease and fatigue since the battle of Busaco, and five thousand sick and wounded encumbered the hospitals which had been hastily formed at Coimbra. Heavy artillery was awanting to combat that which was so plentifully arrayed on the British redoubts; and it was even doubtful if the ammunition of the army would suffice for so desperate a shock as might be expected in the assault. On the other hand, a retreat was not to be thought of; for, independent of the dangers and privations by which it would inevitably be attended, the wrath of the Emperor at the failure of the expedition was more to be dreaded than any efforts of the enemy. Still his present situation was full of danger, which was daily increasing; for the invading host had plunged into the country, according to Napoleon's fashion, without magazines of any kind, and relying entirely on the resources they might find in it, and these were almost entirely wasted by the passage of two great armies over it, and the efforts made by the British to drive the whole cattle and provisions that were portable into their own lines. Pressed by so many difficulties, the French general remained motionless and undecided in front of the British lines, sending off the most pressing letters to the Emperor, representing his situation and difficulties, and praying for reinforcements, especially in artillery and ammunition.[1] But meanwhile the dangers of his situation were hourly increasing; his communications with Spain and France

[1] Koch, vii. 232, 233; Wellington to Lord Liverpool, Oct. 20, 1810; Gurw. vii. 499; Lond. ii. 28, 29.

in rear were entirely cut off; the whole provisions in the vicinity of the army were soon exhausted, and the famishing soldiers were obliged to straggle twenty and thirty miles off to extract them at the point of the bayonet from the wretched inhabitants; and Colonel Trant, having collected 5000 militia, and made an attack on Coimbra directly in his rear, captured the whole sick and wounded it contained, amounting to 5000 men.

29. Improved situation of Wellington.

The great reliance of Massena in this long tarrying in so dangerous a situation, was on the expected failure of supplies for the British army. Napoleon had strongly impressed upon him the difficulty of getting provisions in Portugal, and forbade the invasion before the harvest was reaped and stored in the barns. When, therefore, the French general saw a British army, containing above 70,000 mouths, and driving before them a helpless crowd of at least as many more, retreat into the immediate vicinity of a city containing 250,000 inhabitants, and already burdened with the crews of a hundred ships lying in the Tagus, it is not surprising that he entertained sanguine hopes that necessity or want of provisions would soon compel the British, as it had done himself at Genoa, to capitulate, or evacuate the country. But, in reasoning in this manner, both the Emperor and his lieutenant forgot the essential difference which the command of the sea made in the two situations. Utterly sterile and unproductive to other nations, the ocean is, as General Jomini long ago observed, prolific of life and strength to the British; it is their true base of military operations. The provident care of the English Government and Lord Wellington had secured supplies, not only in sufficient quantities, but abundance, as well for the whole fighting men assembled in front, as for the crews of the ships, the inhabitants of Lisbon, and the immense crowd of rural inhabitants who had been driven forward into the lines. Vessels laden with grain in great quantities daily arrived in the Tagus from Barbary, Egypt, and the Le-

CHAP. V. 1810.

vant, which amply supplied the wants of the capital; and between the British army and the poor inhabitants, with whose support they charged themselves, a hundred and thirty thousand rations were, in the latter days of the occupation, daily served out from the British stores. Reinforcements also came pouring in on all sides: six battalions of English troops arrived from England, four from Cadiz, mustering 7000 bayonets. This seasonable addition raised the British force, exclusive of the Portuguese, on paper, to 41,000, of whom 33,000 were present in the field. The Portuguese were 30,000 men, and the Spaniards 4000, so that there were 67,000 good troops amply supplied with provisions, occupying impregnable lines armed by 420 guns! In addition to this the troops were all fresh, comfortably hutted, amply supplied with provisions, and in excellent spirits. The victory of Busaco, and evident strength of their present position, had dispelled all the sinister forebodings among them which the long continuance of the retreat had produced; and the cheerful confidence in the future which the chief always expressed, and his staff repeated, communicated itself to the men, and produced a universal exhilaration.[1]

[1] Sir Chas. Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, Oct. 10, 1810, MS.; Lond. ii. 30.

30. Depressed condition of the French army.

In all these respects the situation of the French army was diametrically the reverse of that of the British. Having ventured into the heart of Portugal without magazines or supplies, they were in a short time reduced to great straits from want of provisions. Rest there was none for the wearied troops. Large bodies of foragers were obliged to be sent out every day to ransack the country for provisions; and as the intermediate and nearer districts became exhausted, the men had to go farther off, until they were to be seen twenty and thirty miles distant from the French lines. In spite of the extraordinary power of extracting resources which long practice had given the French soldiers, they were at length utterly at fault, from the entire consumption of the stores of the inhabitants. Meanwhile the Portuguese militia, under

Silviera and Bacillar, above 20,000 strong, was drawing round their rear, and entirely cut off all communication with Spain. Though little formidable in the open field, these desultory bands did essential service by intercepting communications, cutting off foragers and convoys, and destroying isolated men. In these operations they were cordially assisted by the whole peasantry of the country, whose resentment had been roused to the highest pitch by the long-continued exactions of the French, and the cruelty with which their demands were enforced. Massena made the utmost efforts to throw a bridge over the Tagus, in order to cross his army over, and carry the war into the Alentejo; but he was constantly defeated by the activity and vigilance of the British flotilla, which had removed all the boats on that river. At length, having exhausted every possible means of subsistence, he suddenly broke up on the night of the 14th November, and withdrew his whole army in the direction of Santarem.[1]

[1] Koch, vii. 238-257; Mem. de Joseph, vii. 190, 191; Marmont, iv. 30; Wellington to Lord Liverpool, Nov. 16, 1810; Gurw. vii. 299.

31. Wellington's foresight of Massena's designs.

Sir Charles Stewart has recorded, as a circumstance extremely remarkable, and almost inexplicable, the accurate prophetic knowledge which Lord Wellington, throughout this memorable campaign, had of the designs of his opponent, and the skill with which, from the very first anticipating what he would do, he adopted the very measures best calculated to counteract them. "The first measure," says he, "which our chief adopted was this: he caused an excellent road to be made on the south side of the Mondego, which extended all the way from Celorico to Ponte de Murcella, and beyond it to Coimbra. His next step was to throw his divisions and brigades along the great gorge extending from Celorico to the Alva; and he so arranged them as that, when the army began to move, the troops followed one another by stages, in the utmost regularity, and without any of that bustle which a march *en masse* unavoidably occasions. Possessed of these advantages, Lord Wellington saw clearly enough that it was in his power, in the event of Massena's advance by any

CHAP. V. 1810.

single road, to cross the Mondego with his whole force, and to throw himself, whenever he chose, between the enemy and Coimbra. As soon, therefore, as Massena's designs were satisfactorily ascertained, he fixed with a master's eye upon the banks of the Dao and the Criz as the proper spots at which to cast impediments in the way of the French, whilst he should perform the arduous and enterprising operation of throwing the entire of his infantry, artillery, and stores, by wretched fords, and still more wretched bridges, across a river of no ordinary dimensions or difficulties. All was accomplished in the very order and manner which he had in his own mind chalked out. The bridges on the Dao and the Criz were then destroyed with astonishing celerity. Craufurd and Pack, with the advanced-guard, were thrown across at Santa Comba Dao; and the rest of the army accomplished a very brilliant manœuvre with the utmost accuracy and perfection; for not a gun got out of its place during the continuance of the march; and when the moment of inquiry arrived, everything was found in the exact spot which it had been intended to occupy. But the most extraordinary feature of all remains yet to be noticed. From the instant when he fixed upon the position of Busaco, Lord Wellington expressed his firm conviction that he would be attacked there; and he adhered to that opinion in opposition to the sentiments of every functionary by whom he was surrounded." This was the more remarkable, that the attacking us there was unquestionably a course which the enemy ought not to have pursued. "Instead of dashing themselves madly against us, they ought to have continued to take ground to their right, and so gone round a stupendous mountain, which the slightest exercise of military penetration might have shown that they need not hope to pass. . . . . Hence I speak of Lord Wellington's prescience as something quite out of the ordinary course of events, inasmuch as Busaco was a position simply and solely because the enemy thought fit, by attacking, to give to it that character."[1]

[1] Lond. ii. 23-26.

When it was first discovered, on the afternoon of the 15th November, that the enemy had retreated in the preceding night, the surprise in the British lines was extreme. It had been known on the preceding day that Drouet, with a reinforcement, estimated at 15,000, though really consisting of only 10,000 men, was on his way to join Massena, and had arrived on that day at Sabugal, and it was thought the French general was only waiting for this accession of force to commence an attack on the British position. When it was found that they really were retreating, Wellington never doubted that they were going to attempt the passage of the Tagus, and carry the war into the provinces to the south of that river. He therefore instantly wrote to Admiral Berkeley, who commanded the fleet in the Tagus, to send up the whole launches and boats of the vessels, in order to pass over Hill's corps to the left bank of the river, or impede the enemy in any attempt at crossing; and in the meanwhile a pursuit was commenced with the light troops. The enemy retired by the road along the right bank of the Tagus towards Santarem, a very strong position, where it was soon discovered they intended to make a stand. That position could only be turned by a very large army; and it was occupied by the French in such strength that it was evident they could not be dislodged but by a general attack. Wellington, therefore, advanced his headquarters to Cartaxo, where they remained for the next two months.[1]

32. Movements of Wellington on the retreat of the French.

1 Wellington to Lord Liverpool, Nov. 16, 1810; Gurw. viii. 478; Lond. ii. 52, 53.

The question of attacking Massena in the new position which he had taken up was anxiously discussed at headquarters. After mature deliberation, Wellington decided that the attempt would be too hazardous; and that as success without risk to the Allied cause was now to all appearance certain, it was not his part to trust anything to chance. The advantages the enemy had gained by this change of position were indeed great, for he had possessed himself of a district rich in corn and abounding in cattle; and his communications with Spain

33. Wellington declines to attack Massena at Santarem.

CHAP. V. 1810.

were in some measure reopened. Yet the time would inevitably come when their stores would be exhausted, and they would be forced either to attack the British in their impregnable lines, or retire into Spain without a combat. Guided by these considerations, Lord Wellington determined to remain on the defensive, and wait till time and famine compelled them to retreat; and in the mean time, in imitation of the enemy, he strengthened his new and more advanced position with redoubts, and commenced the construction of a fresh fortified position covering Lisbon on the south of the Tagus, to which he might retire, as he had done to Torres Vedras, in the event of his adversary, in overwhelming strength and joined by Soult from Andalusia, transferring the war, as he expected he would, into that quarter.[1]

[1] Lond. ii. 57, 60, 61; Wellington to Lord Liverpool, Jan. 5, 1811; Gurw. vi. 478, 479; Brialmont, by Gleig, i. 330, 331.

34. Improved health and spirits of the troops.

Meanwhile the troops lay in their huts in the new position around Cartaxo, and their health and spirits soon became excellent. When not on duty, the officers went out fishing and shooting, as if they had been in England. The desponding feelings which had been general when the retreat was going on, disappeared when the plan of their chief became apparent; and it was evident that they possessed in their rear a stronghold which could never be forced, to which they could securely retire in the event of an overwhelming force being brought against them. Provisions were abundant in the camp; the health of the soldiers, generally speaking, was excellent; and every facility was given to their enjoying themselves as much as possible. Among other expedients to enliven the vacant hours was a military pageant at the investing Marshal Beresford with the Order of the Bath, which went off with the utmost *eclat*. "Seldom," says Sir Charles Stewart, "has an army, occupying ground in the face of its enemy, enjoyed so many hours of relaxation, or contrived to unite so completely the pleasures of country life with the serious business of war. It is probably needless to add, that so great a show of

security in their leader had the best possible effect upon the temper of the troops, or that the *morale* of the army was sustained not more by a contemplation of things as they really were, than by a conviction that they must be going on prosperously, otherwise so much relaxation could not abound." The only real difficulty which was encountered arose from the number of pacific inhabitants who had been driven to take refuge in the lines, great part of whom required to be fed from the public stores, and among whom contagious disorders soon broke out which carried off great numbers.[1]

[1] Lond. ii. 44; Brial. i. 331.

35. Wretched condition of the French army.

In all these respects the situation of the French army presented a painful contrast to that of the British. Though they had gained much by their retreat to Santarem and the fruitful meadows of the Zezere, yet the resources even of that rich country could not long avail them. They were compelled to trust entirely to foraging and requisitions to obtain supplies of any sort, either for men or horses. Every day it became necessary to extend farther the circuit over which the marauding war was carried on. One-half of the army was daily told off, and regularly employed in these foraging expeditions, which soon proved not less ruinous to the discipline of the troops than it was vexatious and destructive to the inhabitants. In spite, however, of all their rigour and searching exactions, the want of everything soon became extreme. "Their ammunition, their medicines, their shoes, their clothing, and provisions, were all at the lowest ebb; whilst their linen, an article upon which the welfare of an army depends in no ordinary degree, was almost entirely exhausted." Fresh supplies of any sort could be got only by straggling twenty or thirty miles in the flanks and in the rear; and great numbers of the detached bodies or isolated men engaged in these expeditions were cut off by the Portuguese militia, or the enraged peasantry whom despair had roused to arms.[1] On their side, the French were not a whit behind their

[1] Brial. i. 331; Lond. ii. 67.

CHAP. V. 1810.

enemies in savage barbarity; and numbers of the peasantry were tortured and hung for not revealing stores of provisions which really did not exist.

36. Wellington's difficulties.

But all this notwithstanding, Wellington had his own difficulties to contend with; and though of a different kind, they were perhaps even more formidable than those which assailed the French Marshal. The Government at home and the House of Commons were by no means equally convinced with him of the possibility of successful resistance to the enemy. The strong apprehensions which they had felt during the retreat in the preceding autumn, though to a certain degree dispelled by the successful stand made at Torres Vedras, returned with redoubled force when Massena halted in his retreat at Santarem and Wellington, instead of attacking him, resumed the system of procrastination, and prepared as for a lengthened campaign in the heart of Portugal. The Government were aghast at the prospect of interminable war carried on in an inland country, and at an enormous expense; nor did they see their way to any satisfactory result even after every imaginable expense had been incurred. Owing to the extreme difficulty of getting specie, the whole remittances to the army cost fifty per cent more than the sum which reached the English general; and even when the remittances did come, which was never till long after they were due, they were seldom a fourth part of what the wants of the troops required. The English system of paying for all supplies of every sort and levying no contributions, was infinitely more burdensome in the outset, though less exasperating in the end, than the French, of taking everything by force and paying for nothing. Of Spain, all in England despaired, and not without reason; and few had confidence in the ability of Portugal, even with all the assistance of Great Britain, to continue the contest with their gigantic opponent.[1] The regency of Portugal was at once unpopular, imbecile, and disaffected; and Wellington found

[1] Brial. i. 336-340; Lond. ii. 96, 97.

to his cost that instead of meeting with support, he in general experienced nothing but opposition and thwarting from the Portuguese authorities, to whose preservation his own efforts were directed.

37. Firmness of Wellington at this juncture.

Everything, in these circumstances, depended on the firmness and resolution of the Commander-in-Chief; but, happily, these were of a kind which were proof against any danger, how great soever. No one was more aware of the difficulties of his situation than Wellington, especially after the destruction of all the Spanish armies enabled the enemy to direct their whole disposable force against him; but he never hesitated under the responsibility, or quailed under the danger, with which a perseverance in the course he had laid out for himself would be attended. "There is no doubt," said he to Sir Charles Stewart, "that the task which I have undertaken is herculean, particularly now that the Spanish armies are all annihilated, and that there is nothing in the shape of an army in the field but ourselves. I think I am, however, in such a situation that I can retire and embark whenever I please; and if that be the case, the longer I stay the better for the cause, and the more honourable to the country. Whether I shall be able to hold my ground at last must of course depend upon the numbers and the means by which I shall be attacked; and, adverting to the difficulties of subsistence even for small numbers in this country, I hope that I shall not be attacked by more than I shall be able to manage. The necessity of keeping my rear open to the Tagus is a difficulty; and I should be able to effect my object with greater ease, if I was not under the necessity of effecting everything, not only without loss, but without risk, or even the appearance of risk, in order to please the good people of England."[1] These were Wellington's sentiments in August 1810; but the difficulties of his situation were terribly increased from the causes which have been mentioned. Such was the penury of the Portuguese Government, in consequence of the devastation of the country

[1] Lond. ii. 97, 98.

CHAP. V. 1810.

and the occupation of a large part of it by the enemy, that their whole army would have perished if they had not been fed from the English magazine; the pay to all the troops was nearly a year in arrears; above 10,000 regular soldiers, and double that number of militia, deserted; and in such a train of difficulties was the Government involved, that they were engaged in a conspiracy to drive the English leaders from the country, and place the Duke of Brunswick at the head of affairs.

38. Napoleon's plan for a fresh invasion of Portugal.

While Wellington was thus systematically pursuing his plan of operations, and calmly awaiting the action of famine and disease to drive the invaders from the Portuguese territory, Napoleon was busy organising a fresh plan of attack, even more formidable, and which, if earlier adopted, might have led to very different results from what actually occurred. The Emperor, who had been made acquainted by General Foy, despatched from Massena's headquarters, with the whole necessities of that Marshal's situation, and the difficulties with which he had to contend, resolved now upon a double attack upon Portugal, both to the north and south of the Tagus. With this view, while he strained every nerve to reinforce Massena's army by means of the corps of Drouet, he advanced a large body of the Imperial Guard, under the Duke of Istria (Bessières), containing 12,000 sabres and bayonets, in the same direction. He sent, at the same time, the most positive orders to Soult to leave the siege of Cadiz, and his much-loved fields of plunder in Andalusia, and invade the Alentejo from the side of Estremadura with the whole disposable force which he could collect from the three corps which had been carried beyond the Sierra Morena. Estimating Massena's force, even after all the losses it had undergone, still at nearly 50,000 combatants, these reinforcements would raise it to 70,000;[1] and if to these were added 20,000 invading the Alentejo, it was difficult to see how Wellington, with a force not in all mustering 60,000 combatants, could success-

[1] Napoleon to Soult, Dec. 15, 1810; Brial. i. 351-353; Koch, vii. 300, 301.

fully withstand such formidable masses, acting on concentric lines and in concert. CHAP. V.

On the 29th December Drouet arrived at Massena's outposts with 9000 men. He was the bearer of the first despatches which that Marshal had received since he crossed the frontier on the 16th September. The positive orders of the Emperor to carry the war to the south of the Tagus, compelled Massena, much against his will, to attempt the passage of the river. But in the interim, Wellington, who was fully alive to the importance of preventing that movement, had been beforehand with him, and not only strengthened Abrantes, so as to put it altogether beyond the reach of a *coup-de-main*, but so disposed Hill's corps along the left bank of the river, that the passage at any point would be extremely difficult. In obedience to the Emperor's orders, however, Massena resolved to make the attempt, and it was anxiously and long debated at the French headquarters whether the bridge should be established at Punhete or Santarem. Reynier strongly supported the latter place, because, close to it, and under cover of guns placed on the heights of Bonavista, there was an island, on which a lodgment might be made. But General Eblé objected that he had not animals of transport sufficient to convey the bridge equipage there by land, and that it would be highly dangerous to attempt to convey it by water under the fire of the English guns. Perplexed with so many difficulties, the French general determined to defer the operation till Soult came up with the fifth corps from Andalusia, so as to dislodge Hill from his commanding position on the southern bank of the river.[1]

1810.

39. Massena's difficulties as to crossing the Tagus.

[1] Koch, vii. 304-329.

The military viceroy of Spain to the south of the Sierra Morena had no inclination to exchange his isolated operations in his own rich domains for a hazardous warfare to the north of those provinces. The positive orders of the Emperor, however, compelled Soult to do something, but he studiously made it as little as possible.

40. Soult's operations in Andalusia.

CHAP. V. 1811.

Napoleon's orders were forthwith to suspend all operations in Andalusia except the blockade of Cadiz, and direct the entire fifth corps with the siege train upon Abrantes, in order to facilitate Massena's passage of the Tagus. Soult represented to the Minister at War, with truth, that such an operation would be hazardous in the extreme, if not impossible, as long as Olivenza, Badajos, Campo Mayor, and Elvas, remained in the hands of the enemy, and that it was indispensable to begin with the reduction of these fortresses. He engaged, however, to make his appearance in Estremadura with 20,000 infantry and 3000 horse, and with these; if joined by 15,000 under Drouet detached from old Castile, he promised not only to reduce these strongholds but to make incursions into the Alentejo to support Massena, and even give a good account of Lord Wellington if he should attack him with his whole force.[1]

[1] Soult to Berthier, May 4, 1811; Joseph's Mem. vii. 399.

41. Great successes of Soult in Estremadura. Jan. 22, 1811.

The operations of Soult against the fortresses were attended in the outset with extraordinary success. Olivenza was blockaded on the 11th January; and on the 22d, the garrison, 4280 strong, was obliged to capitulate, the negligence of the Spaniards having left it wholly without provisions. After this success, Soult moved forward Mortier's corps to form the siege of Badajos, which, being a place of much greater strength, and garrisoned by 9000 men, was expected to make a resolute defence, and at all events to detain the enemy before its walls until Wellington was in a situation to detach a corps for its relief. These hopes, however, were miserably disappointed. Ground was broken before the walls on the 28th January, and on the 11th February the outwork of Pardaleras was taken by assault. The operations were, after this, retarded by the flooding of the Guadiana and the Gebora, which covered the army of Mendizabel, which Lord Wellington, after the death of Romana, had detached from his army to co-operate in the defence. But the floods having fallen, the French forthwith forded

both rivers, and, having established a mortar battery which threw a few shells into the camp under the guns of the place which Mendizabel held, the Spaniards abandoned the position, and were immediately after attacked by Girard and Latour Maubourg, and totally defeated. The siege was now resumed, and, the Governor having been unfortunately killed, the command devolved on Imaz, a man of a very different stamp. A breach of the most imperfect kind having been effected, he immediately proposed to capitulate, and surrendered with 9000 men on the 11th March. This untoward event was the more inexcusable and to be regretted, that before it took place the Governor had been informed that Beresford was approaching with 12,000 men to raise the siege; so that if he had held out a few days longer this important fortress would have been saved. The treachery which had surrendered this stronghold was made manifest by what immediately after occurred at Campo Mayor, which, though garrisoned only by two hundred men with five guns, being under the command of Major Tallaia, a gallant Portuguese officer, only surrendered on 23d March after a regular siege, and having exhausted all means of defence.[1]

Feb. 18.

[1] Mem. de Joseph, vii. 394, 395; Lond. ii. 73-76.

42. Napoleon's order to Massena at this period.

Meanwhile, on the north of the Tagus, Massena with his wearied and famishing army was struggling between the necessities of his situation and the positive orders of the Emperor. On the 5th February, General Foy returned with a reinforcement of 1862 foot and 140 horse, bearing with him a despatch of great value, as unfolding both the views of Napoleon on the prosecution of the campaign, and the ulterior designs which rendered him so desirous for its continued prosecution. "The Emperor," said Berthier, "attaches the greatest importance to your continuing to keep the English in check, and having bridges on the Zezere and the Tagus. The season is about to become favourable for military operations, and you will easily find means to harass the English and cause

CHAP. V. 1811.

them to experience considerable losses. The position of the English army in Portugal keeps London in a continual agony; and the Emperor considers it of the utmost importance to hold the English in check, still contriving to draw them on so as to cause them to experience losses in affairs of the advanced-guards, until you are in a condition to engage them in a general battle. I have reiterated the orders to the Duke of Treviso (Mortier) to march on the Tagus with the fifth corps. Your bridges being established on the Zezere, the most natural line of operations will be by the left bank of that river. The Emperor has sent despatches to Count D'Erlon (Drouet) to give no rest to Silviera, Trant, or Wilson, to retake Guarda, Ponte Murcella, and Coimbra, and to use the utmost efforts to keep open the communications with the army of Portugal. He has also decreed the formation of an army of reserve in the north of Spain, and has given orders to its commander, the Duke of Istria (Bessières), to hold a corps of 6000 men, in the neighbourhood of Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida, ready to relieve the two divisions of the ninth corps which is to pass under the orders of the Prince of Essling." [1]

[1] Berthier to Massena, Jan. 15, 1810; Koch, vii. 305,306.

43. Operations of the French and English for crossing the Tagus.

In pursuance of these peremptory orders, preparations for crossing both the Zezere and the Tagus were made with the utmost vigour. General Eblé had by indefatigable efforts collected and built one hundred and twenty boats at Punhete, and got together the materials for three bridges, of which one was intended for the Zezere, and the two others for the Tagus. But meanwhile Wellington was not idle. By the end of January, when the French preparations for the crossing of the latter river were completed, the left bank was so defended by batteries of heavy artillery that all crossing below Punhete had been rendered impossible. Attempts were then made to effect the passage above that town; and to avoid the fire of the English batteries, Eblé constructed fifty carts, on which the boats were conveyed, by a passage

cut through a rocky mountain, to the point selected for embarkation at Montalvao. But the vigilance of Beresford defeated his projects, for he erected batteries opposite to the point where the passage was to be attempted, and stationed signals along the whole line so as to enable him to bring a powerful force to any point. Defeated in this project, Massena next attempted to effect the passage at Santarem; but there too he found the opposite bank so strongly guarded, and the difficulty of the crossing, owing to shoals in the river at that point, such, that the design was abandoned as impracticable.[1]

[1] Koch, vii. 307-309; Lond. ii. 76, 77.

44. Massena's retreat.

But matters had now reached a point in the French army which rendered an early decision indispensable; for in a very few weeks, if they remained in their present quarters, both men and horses would die of famine. On the night of the 5th March, accordingly, Massena suddenly, and with great secrecy, commenced his retreat from Santarem; and with such skill was the movement conducted, that it was not till noon on the following day that their departure was discovered. The British immediately broke up and advanced in pursuit, and headquarters were the same evening established in the same town, while dispositions were made for following the enemy, both on the main road, which their principal column had taken, and also on all parallel routes by which part were retiring. The French, however, "retired from the country as they had entered it," as Wellington said—"in a solid mass," affording little opportunity for harassing them in their retreat with any but a force equal to their own.[2]

[2] Wellington to Lord Liverpool, March 14, 1811; Gurw. vii. 344; Lond. ii. 78, 79; Koch, vii. 336-338.

45. Gloomy state of the British army at this period.

It is remarkable that at the time when this retreat was finally commenced, the British army was in hardly less difficulties than the French, in consequence of other and not less powerful causes. Not only was the Government at home beyond measure alarmed at the expense of the contest, and doubtful of its ultimate success, but they had carried their desponding views so far that Wellington, in obedience to their wishes, had made preparations with

CHAP. V. 1811.

Admiral Berkeley for the embarkation of the troops in certain events. In the British army, indeed, there was no want of anything, owing to the provident care of Wellington, the vigour of the commissaries, and the liberal expenditure of the Government; but the expenditure had now reached such a point that it was doubtful whether it could continue much longer. The Portuguese troops, not supported by an equally powerful exchequer, were in the most miserable state. Like the French, they were literally starving, and but for the supplies from the British magazines they would nearly all have died of famine. The commissariat was inefficient, the Government lukewarm or treacherous; and at the crisis of the contest, some of the members of the regency, instead of attending to the wants of their forces, were busied in writing anonymous letters to Lord Wellington. From the combined operation of these causes, the Portuguese army had become during the winter not only relaxed in discipline and efficiency, but extremely reduced in numbers. Desertion went on to an alarming extent. In the middle of March it was reduced to less than a half of the amount it had reached at the battle of Busaco, and many regiments had scarce a third of their complement on paper around their standards. As to the militia, it exhibited more than the usual inefficiency of this species of force. It was set down on paper at 45,000; but the fact was, there never had been so many as 25,000 actually in the field. When Massena began his retreat, and Wellington his pursuit, the entire force of the former had been reduced to 40,792 men, with 7619 horses and 53 guns. No less than 19,000 men and 4597 horses had been lost since the invasion commenced, of whom 4071 were prisoners of war, including those taken at Coimbra.[1] Wellington's army present under arms at the same time consisted of 29,497 British and 29,000 Portuguese, but of these upwards of 5000 were at Lisbon, Elvas, and Cadiz, leaving about 52,000 present on the two banks of the Tagus.[2]

[1] See Tables in Koch, vii. 575, 590.

[2] Wellington's Memorandum, Feb. 23, 1811; Gurw. vii. 299.

When the retreat commenced from Santarem, the French retired with such precipitation that it was some days before their rearguard could be overtaken. Wellington, however, threw forward his divisions with such skill that the enemy, to avoid being turned, were obliged to evacuate all the positions in the mountains which they successively took up, and, being unable to gain time sufficient to construct a bridge over the Mondego, they were thrown back from Coimbra and Upper Beira, for which they were making, and obliged to fall back upon the old and wasted line by Ponte de Murcella. By these means Coimbra and the northern provinces were saved from their ravages, and a communication with the latter, long closed, was opened up. Ammunition-waggons were blown up, and guns destroyed and abandoned in many places; and as the troops had no provisions with them, and were obliged to forage in an exhausted country for the commonest food, the sufferings of the men were extreme. But as the British followed them over the same wasted line, and the march was so rapid and the means of transport so scanty that the supplies from the rear could not keep pace with them, the pangs of want were also felt in their army. Rapid pursuit was often rendered impossible from the want of animals to carry the necessary food for the troops; and the French were frequently saved from disaster by the extent of the howling wilderness they had created around them. "The line of the enemy's march," says Sir Charles Stewart, "could be everywhere traced by the smoke of cottages, hamlets, and towns, which they reduced to ashes; and even those which escaped the ravages of the flames were left in a state of total dilapidation and absolute destitution."[1]

46. First operations of Wellington in pursuit.

[1] Lond. ii. 82; Wellington to Lord Liverpool, March 13, 1811; Gurw. vii. 346, 347.

The first place where Massena's rearguard showed a disposition to make a stand was at Redinha, on the 11th March. On the 9th, at Pombrel, the leading brigade came up with the enemy, and made two hundred prisoners; and on the evening of the 11th, the two armies were so near

47. Action at Redinha. March 12.

CHAP. V.

1811.

that arrangements were made for bringing the French to action; and six divisions, mustering 27,000 combatants, were brought up for that purpose. In the night, however, the enemy retired, covered by a large body of cavalry, the entire 6th corps of infantry, and part of the 8th;

March 12.

and when day broke on the morning of the 12th, a strong rearguard only was visible guarding the entrance of a defile in front of the village of Redinha. It consisted of Ney's corps, which had been forced by Massena to stand firm there, in order to give the artillery and carriages of the army time to retire through the defile. At four in the morning, Wellington put all the forces which he had in hand, consisting of the 1st, 3d, 4th, 5th, 6th, and light divisions, with the cavalry and some light guns, to turn on each flank the rearguard at the entrance of the defile. The Allied troops advanced in beautiful order, in three lines against the enemy in front, while the two wings moved forward in similar array to turn their flank.[1]

[1] Koch, vii. 351-365; Wellington to Lord Liverpool, March 13, 1811; Gurw. vii. 345, 346; Brial. ii. 361, 362.

48. Which is carried by the Allies.

Ney, with this rearguard, stood firm and disputed the pass, repulsing all attacks for several hours; but at length the increasing masses of the Allies, which were threatening his flank, obliged him to withdraw, and Redinha was occupied by the British. The French again showed front on some high and rocky ground on the other side of the village; and, as the position could only be reached by crossing a narrow bridge, or a ford adjoining it, both of which were under the fire of the enemy's guns, some delay was experienced before they could be passed in sufficient force to enable the position to be carried. At length, however, a force equal to the attack having got over, Picton moved forward and drove the enemy in splendid style from the rocky height on which his left rested; upon which Ney, with the main body, retired towards Condeixa; and night having come on, Wellington's men bivouacked on the ground they had won, close to the outposts of the enemy.[2]

[2] Wellington to Lord Liverpool, March 14, 1811; Gurw. vii. 345, 346; Lond. ii. 79, 80; Koch, vii. 365, 366.

In the position to which Massena now retired, which

was singularly strong, he collected three entire corps, forming his whole army, with the exception of the second corps, which was at Espinhel; and Wellington, deeming an attack in front likely to induce too great a loss of life, resolved to dislodge them by turning their flank. With this view he moved Picton's division through the mountains on the enemy's left, which, after a long and fatiguing circuit, succeeded in reaching their communications in rear of Condeixa. Upon seeing this Ney instantly threw his troops into columns of march, and began his retreat through that town, which was committed to the flames. This retreat, though in the circumstances unavoidable, highly irritated Massena, who declared it was done without his knowledge or consent. But Ney, however vacillating and irresolute in devising measures to avert future danger, never failed to recover his presence of mind in presence of it. At the head of a solid mass of 10,000 men, which formed the rearguard, he retreated slowly, and in the best order, taking advantage of every position where it was possible for a few hours to arrest the pursuers, and arranging his troops so skilfully, that, when one rearguard fell back, it was only to re-form and again present a menacing front to the enemy in pursuit, under cover of another already drawn up and prepared to dispute the passage.[1]

49. Continuance of the retreat.

1 Wellington to Lord Liverpool, March 14, 1811; Gurw. vii. 346; Koch vii. 374; Lond. ii. 80, 81.

Once only during this part of the retreat the Allies pressed so closely on the rearguard that a considerable disaster was sustained by the retreating army, and a still greater was on the point of being suffered. Ney had left two divisions on the British side of the bridge which crosses the stream of the Ceira, to cover the passage of the army over that narrow defile. Wellington instantly saw his advantage, and, giving orders to all the troops to advance in double-quick time, and the guns at the trot, succeeded in reaching the column before half of them had got over. The position held by the rearguard was very strong; but Wellington made the attack with such vigour,

50. Combat at the bridge of the Ceira. March 15.

CHAP. V.

1811.

with Picton's, Campbell's, and the light division under Sir William Erskine, that the enemy were driven back in great confusion towards the Ceira. In the confusion several French regiments disbanded, and threw themselves into the river, the colonel of the 39th Regiment was taken, and that regiment lost its eagle, though it was lost in the scuffle, and not captured by the Allies. Ney, upon hearing the tumult, returned to the rearguard, with which he made good the bridge till nightfall, when the rearguard withdrew across it, and immediately destroyed the arches. The French in this disastrous affair lost 700 men, chiefly drowned; and what was still worse, several of their regiments were broken and dispersed.[1]

[1] Koch, vii. 381-397; Gurw. vii. 359; Lond. ii. 81.

51. Continuance of the retreat across the Ceira.

The heavy rains which fell at this time rendered the Ceira not fordable, and the bridge being broken down, it was some time before another could be erected. On the 17th, however, the passage was effected, and the advanced posts of the army reached the Sierra de Murcella, the enemy having taken up a superb position on the opposite side of the Alva. Ney was in the centre, and Junot on his right, and Reynier should have taken post on his left, which would have presented a very strong line of defence. But instead of joining the other corps there, Reynier had retired far to the rear, and taken up more comfortable quarters at a distance behind, on the Sierra de Moita, a branch of the Sierra d'Estrella. Ney felt extremely uneasy in this situation, and he wrote to Massena, at eight in the morning of the 17th: "It is indispensable to retire, not only on account of the separation of the corps of the army, but because the soldiers are dying of hunger, and disperse in quest of food. I await with the utmost impatience the order to retire, for every moment of delay may induce the ruin of the army, which has hitherto escaped as if by a miracle. I give you fair notice, that if in the course of the day I do not receive an order to retreat, I shall set

out to-morrow morning with the 6th corps, and take a position at Galices." Meanwhile the English divisions of Pack and Erskine crossed the Alva in front, while the right, consisting of three divisions, passed over the unoccupied portion of the Sierra de Murcella, and turned the position of the French, which obliged Ney to retire. He bitterly blamed Reynier for not being at hand to support him on this occasion. "He put me in the greatest embarrassment; I will be obliged," said he, "to set out instantly instead of to-morrow morning. *This conduct of General Reynier is frightful.*" Ney fell back accordingly, and the position the French had in Portugal was lost.[1]

[1] Thiers, xii. 608; Koch, vii. 394-396; Gurw. vii. 372, 373.

52. Difficulties of the pursuit.

"All Massena's precautions," says Sir Charles Stewart, "would have failed to preserve him, had it been possible to transport stores and provisions as rapidly as our troops were capable of marching; but on the 19th it was found that the columns had outstripped their supplies, and a halt of some days was necessary to give the latter time to overtake them."[1] On this occasion at least the French derived a material benefit from the abominable way in which they had carried on the war; they were sheltered in the solitude which themselves had made. The whole country, far and wide, through which the army passed, having been laid waste, and not only the whole provisions but every animal it contained carried off, it became a matter of absolute impossibility to overtake them, except with provisions and the means of transport brought up from the rear; and this in a country so wasted was a matter of time and difficulty.[2]

[1] Lond. ii. 81.

[2] Wellington to Lord Liverpool, March 27, 1811; Gurw. vii. 398; Lond. ii. 82.

53. Concluding combat at Sabugal. April 3.

The retiring invaders were now approaching the frontier, and one action more signalised the British arms in this memorable retreat. This took place on the 3d April at Sabugal on the Coa. On that occasion the French 2d corps, commanded by Reynier, was seen in position with its right immediately above the bridge and town of Sabugal, and its left extended along the road to

CHAP. V.

1811.

Alfayates, so as to command all the approaches from the fords of the Coa towards the upper part of the town. "Wellington made his dispositions," says Sir Charles Stewart, "to attack it in front, flank, and rear at the same moment; and but for the unfortunate occurrence of a sudden shower of rain, it would have been, in all probability, annihilated."[1] The tempest rendered it impossible to see anything, and the Allied troops, pushing forward in the dark, came upon the left of the main body, which it was intended they should have turned. The light troops were, in consequence, driven back upon the 43d Regiment, and the enemy, seeing that the column was not strong, sallied forth and attacked it in a solid mass, supported by cavalry and artillery. The 43d, however, by a steady and well-directed fire in line, repelled the onset; but having advanced in pursuit, they were themselves taken in flank on the left by a fresh column of infantry, and on their right by a body of hussars. They retired upon this, and took post behind a wall, from which they a second time repulsed both the horse and foot of the enemy, and, advancing a second time in pursuit, they made themselves masters of a howitzer. The French renewed the attack with a fresh column, supported by cavalry, upon which the British again retired to their post, when they were joined by the two battalions of the 52d and the 1st Portuguese Caçadores. Supported now by something like an equality of force, the British a third time issued forth, and a furious combat ensued, chiefly for the possession of the howitzer. The French drove back the 43d and the other brigade, who carried with them the piece they had taken, and took position in an enclosure on the top of a hill, where the enemy were making preparations to attack them, when the head of the other column, consisting of Picton's light infantry, Colville's brigade, and Dunlop's column, appeared and opened fire on them.[2] Finding himself now overmatched, Reynier sounded a retreat,

[1] Lond. ii. 83.

[2] Wellington to Lord Liverpool, April 9, 1811; Gurw. vii. 432; Koch, vii. 434, 435.

his entire corps fell back, and the whole army crossed the Coa, and retired into Spain, leaving the howitzer, the object of so much contest, and three hundred prisoners, in the hands of the British, in this the last, and not the least glorious action of the campaign.

Thus ended the third French invasion of Portugal. The result cannot be better given than in the words of M. Thiers: "The appearance of the army when it re-entered Spain was profoundly affecting, and not less strange than the campaign had been. When the cannon sounded, the soldiers were found in their ranks as firm and docile to the voice of their chiefs as on a parade, especially in Ney's corps, which, during that retreat, preserved the most admirable consistency. With that exception, they were half dispersed, running here and there in quest of provisions. They were to be seen on all sides marching in disorderly crowds, loaded with plunder, mingled with long files of wounded borne by asses, with artillery and baggage-waggons drawn by oxen, for the greater part of the horses had died from want of nourishment. Hardly did there remain horses enough to manœuvre the guns in presence of the enemy, and the cavalry were in such a state of exhaustion that the riders could not venture to give their steeds the rein for a charge. The soldiers, blackened by the sun, thin, covered with rags, without shoes, but still bold and audacious in language, did not support their distress with the resignation which sometimes dignifies misfortune. They vented their ill-humour on all the world, for so many sufferings undergone to no purpose; they broke out against their immediate superiors, the generals-in-chief, the Emperor himself. Massena, who, in the opening of the campaign, was surrounded with such a blaze of glory, had lost his prestige by the fault of the commanders of corps under him, who had not spared him in their discourse, and unfortunately also by his own fault.[1] Old, worn-out, having need of a repose which he had not once enjoyed for twenty years, he had

54. State of the French army when it re-entered Spain.

[1] Thiers, xii. 611, 612.

CHAP. V. 1811.

had the weakness to seek consolation in some pleasures little suited to his age, and of which those, least of all, should be rendered witnesses whom he was called on to command."

55. Material losses of the French army during the campaign.

The material losses of the French army during this disastrous campaign were on a level with the calamities to which it was exposed and the sufferings which it endured. We have the authority of General Koch, the able biographer of Massena, for the assertion, that the army was reduced to nearly half its amount on commencing the invasion, when it recrossed the Agueda and reentered Spain. The army, after the fall of Ciudad Rodrigo, consisted of 59,965 men, of whom 55,000 actually entered Portugal; and it had 17,000 horses for the cavalry, artillery, and equipages. During the retreat, they were reinforced by 7300 under Drouet, and 1860 with Foy—in all, 64,160. On returning to Spain it consisted only of 34,161 foot-soldiers and 3400 cavalry, with 5868 horses for the artillery and baggage; exhibiting a loss in effective men of 26,000 soldiers and 11,000 horses! Yet was this disastrous campaign not without glory to the French arms; for Massena retired sixty leagues over a desolate and wasted country, followed by an army equal to his own, with the loss only of one howitzer and one eagle wrested from his men in fight.[1]

1 Koch, vii. 415-438; Pieces Just, Nos. VII., VIII., and IX.

56. Wellington's views of the campaign, and share Sir Chas. Stewart had in it.

"If Imaz had not sold Badajos," said Wellington, on 20th March, "I think the Peninsula would have been safe. I should have relieved the south of Spain at all events, and the war would have been placed on a new footing. I am not certain that I shall be not able to do something of the kind even now; but I wait to decide what plan I shall adopt, till I hear the result of General Graham's operations against Victor." As it was, the campaign had saved the Peninsula, though Imaz's treachery at Badajos required to be washed out in torrents of British blood. In these glorious and most momentous operations Sir Charles Stewart bore his whole share, except-

ing in the French retreat, when he was confined to bed by fever, and only rejoined the Commander-in-Chief on the Spanish frontier. The glory of them necessarily redounded chiefly to the Commander-in-Chief. A subordinate officer's duty consists in the faithful and energetic carrying out of the orders of his superiors; a staff-officer's in being the right hand of the general. The Adjutant-General of the army, Sir Charles Stewart, was in every sense the *Adjutant* of the Commander-in-Chief; and if we would read aright the story of the great services which, during the Peninsular campaign, he rendered to his country, we must study the annals of those memorable victories and deep combinations by which Wellington then laid the foundation of the deliverance of Europe, and in which he bore so important a part.[1]

[1] Wellington to the Hon. Henry Wellesley, March 20, 1811; Gurw. vii. 317.

CHAPTER VI.

SIR CHARLES STEWART FROM THE RENEWAL OF THE CAMPAIGN IN PORTUGAL IN MAY 1811 TO THE FALL OF CIUDAD RODRIGO AND HIS RETURN TO ENGLAND IN JANUARY 1812.

1811.

1. Renewed plan for the invasion of Portugal.

TAUGHT by the disastrous issue of the preceding campaign in Portugal, Napoleon lost no time in transmitting to Massena detailed orders for the renewal of the war in that country on a new and more judicious plan. The basis of these operations, which were prescribed at a time when he was not aware of the entire evacuation of the disputed territory by the French troops, was, that Coimbra and the *tête-du-pont* at Murcella should be fortified, Almeida dismantled, Wellington attacked and driven into his lines at Torres Vedras, where he was either to be assailed, if Massena was in sufficient strength to do so, or, at all events, kept in check, so as to be prevented from sending detachments into Estremadura, while the French general should send out foraging parties to Oporto, so as to lay all the northern provinces of Portugal under contribution. Having by these means restored the discipline and efficiency of his army, he was in September, after the harvest had been gathered in, to commence a fresh advance upon Lisbon, in conjunction with a powerful force fitted out by Soult from the army of Andalusia. For this purpose the whole army of Massena, aided by the Imperial Guard under Bessières, which was to advance from Valladolid to its support, was to move forward along the right bank of the Tagus, and form a junction with a powerful

detachment from the army of the centre, which was to move upon Alcantara, and unite with the army of Portugal at Abrantes. At the same time Soult, with the whole force he could spare from Andalusia, was to advance into the Alentejo from Badajos to the same point, and threaten Lisbon from its southern and comparatively defenceless side. The united strength of the three armies would amount to 80,000 men—a force with which it would be easy to drive the English into the sea. "Recollect, Marshal," the letter concluded, "that you are in presence of an army which represents a power against which the least advantage *is, politically speaking, of the utmost importance.* They speak in Spain of a war with Russia: in the first place, there is no foundation for the report; in the next, if it was true, that would have no influence on the war in Spain. *The Emperor is strong enough to make head against them all.*"[1]

[1] Berthier to Massena, April 2, 1811; Koch, vii. 460-463.

2. Wellington's movements to regain Badajos.

Wellington was too sagacious not to anticipate that, if Portugal was again to be invaded, it would be on the plan detailed in this despatch; and accordingly he attached the utmost importance to the possession of Badajos, which, if maintained by the Allies, would effectually prevent this co-operation between the armies of the north and the south. It has been seen, accordingly, with what mortification he received the account of the surrender of that fortress, and how rapidly he had taken measures, after the retreat of Massena commenced, to prevent it falling into the hands of the enemy. He had detached Beresford with the second and fourth, and Hamilton's Portuguese division, the 13th Light Dragoons, and two brigades of artillery, to raise the siege of that town; and on the 25th March that general came up with a convoy which was making for Badajos, and by a brilliant charge made himself master of it, though our troops, having advanced too far in pursuit, and got under the guns of the fortress, were thrown into disorder. The convoy slipped out of their hands in consequence, and, with the

CHAP. VI. 1811.

exception of a single howitzer and a few ammunition-waggons, got into the fortress. Great difficulty was then experienced in crossing the Guadiana so as to invest Badajos; and during the time consumed in making the necessary preparations, the enemy had time to repair the breaches made by Soult's guns, and throw considerable supplies into the fortress. This done, Mortier retired to Seville, leaving it to its own resources, having previously thrown 400 men into Olivenza, in order to retard the advance of the Allies against the principal fortress. Beresford intrusted the attack of this fort to General Cole, who sat down before it on the 11th April; and on the 15th, a practicable breach having been made, the place surrendered at discretion. Having thus cleared the way, Cole threw a small garrison into Olivenza, and hastened to return to Beresford, who meanwhile had established a bridge of casks over the ford at Juramenha, so as to render it practicable for artillery. The guns and small siege-train were immediately crossed over, and a *tête-du-pont*, garrisoned by 1500 men, established for the protection of the bridge; and the bulk of his force having been established in an intrenched position at Santa Martha, the investment of Badajos was rendered complete.[1]

April 5 & 6.

April 11.

[1] Lond. ii. 86-88; Sir Chas. Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, April 24, 1811, MS.

3. Wellington undertakes the siege of Badajos. April 20.

Matters were in this state when Lord Wellington, having finished the expulsion of the army of Massena from Portugal, and deeming it incapable of resuming offensive operations for a month or six weeks to come, resolved to take advantage of the breathing time afforded to wrest Badajos from the enemy. Having disposed everything for a cautious defensive campaign in the north accordingly, and for the blockade of Almeida, which it was expected would soon fall from want of provisions, he hastened in person to Beresford's headquarters, and took the command of the siege. It was indispensable to the success of this operation that it should be conducted with the utmost expedition; for in less than three weeks, it was well known, from the time of trenches being opened, Soult

would make his appearance from Andalusia with a force sufficient to raise the siege. Thus sixteen days of open trenches, and for making the whole preparations for the assault, was all that could be allowed. Wellington, however, did not despair of carrying the place in that short time, and with the limited means at his disposal. He gave orders, accordingly, for the immediate commencement of the siege, and ground was broken before the castle, and the outworks of the Pardaleras and Fort Christoval, on the 22d April. In conjunction with Sir Charles Stewart and all his staff, the Commander-in-Chief was busily engaged in the arrangements for the siege, when advices reached him from Sir Brent Spencer of such a formidable concentration of troops in the neighbourhood of Ciudad Rodrigo, as indicated a determination on the part of Massena, not only to raise the blockade of, and revictual, Almeida, but to relieve Badajos by a serious irruption into the northern provinces of Portugal. Sensible of the danger, Wellington hastened from the banks of the Guadiana to those of the Agueda, and arrived just in time to meet the danger with which his troops were there threatened.[1]

April 22.

[1] Lond. ii. 89, 90.

4. Position of the troops covering the blockade of Almeida.

Wellington, on arriving there, found the troops in the positions which he had assigned to them, which are thus distinctly explained by Sir Charles Stewart: "Between the Dos Casas and the Turones rivers there extends a range of heights, which formed on the present occasion the main feature in our position. Our right, though placed directly upon Nava d'Aver, might be said in strictness to rest upon the Coa; for the country between the Coa and the village being extremely impracticable, little danger was to be apprehended from any attempt made in that quarter. Our centre extended along the heights just alluded to, between the villages of FUENTES D'ONORE and Villa Formosa; while our left, which embraced Fort Conception and Valdelamula, circled round by Almeida, so as to complete the blockade of that important place, at

CHAP. VI. 1811.

the same time that it *appuyed* upon ground extremely favourable. With respect to the arrangement of the troops a few words will suffice. On the extreme right of the line General Houston, with the 7th division, took post, the cavalry being formed next to him, though somewhat in advance. After the 7th came the 1st division, thrown considerably forward, and upon very advantageous ground, and communicating on its left with the 3d, which again held connection with the light, as it did with the 6th and 5th. The 5th division, under Sir William Erskine, formed the extreme left of the line; whilst the blockade of Almeida was, in an especial manner, committed to the 6th division, under General Campbell. Every division and brigade was, however, in a situation to move at a moment's warning, and by short and direct paths, to any part in the entire line which might be threatened; and hence, though to external appearance our flanks were far removed from one another, the space of three hours would have brought the most distant battalions in position to the same ground at any given point."[1]

[1] Lond. ii. 90, 91.

5. Description of Fuentes d'Onore.

"Fuentes d'Onore," which gave its name to the sanguinary battle which ensued, "was not, strictly speaking, embraced in our position; and though occupied by the light troops of the 1st and 3d divisions, supported by the 7th Regiment, it was held merely as an advanced post. . . . It stands at the bottom of a valley, and on the bank of a small rivulet or brook. On either side are rising grounds, and through it passes the main road to Caseja, Gallegos, and thence to Ciudad Rodrigo. On the Ciudad Rodrigo side an extensive morass is bounded, at some distance, by a thick wood; and though the ground certainly rises there, as it does in rear of the village, still the troops which advance in a hostile attitude from that quarter must pass over a considerable tract where they will be exposed to a heavy and destructive fire from almost every point. The village itself is crossed in various directions by walls, which afforded excellent cover for infantry, and were not

altogether profitless against artillery; whilst in its rear arise some rocky heights, which at once covered the troops whilst in possession of the place, and afforded them a safe place of retreat in case they should be driven out. Above these rocky heights was our main line arrayed, from whence, in case of need, reinforcements could be continually sent to the troops in the village; whilst, in the event of the village itself being carried, the conquerors would find that their labours, so far from being completed, were only beginning. To sum up all in a few words: it would be extremely difficult to conceive a post so well adapted to give to its defenders a superiority quite unusual over any force which might attack them—so easy of defence from its local situation, so secure in point of retreat, and withal so extremely important to the line which it was designed to cover, as furnishing an arena of contest quite distinct from the main position, and totally independent of it. This post became, as soon as Massena was in a condition to renew hostilities, the theatre of operations hardly less sanguinary or less glorious than the hills of Busaco or the plains of Talavera."[1] The only objection to this position was, that the Turones, a river with steep banks, in most places impracticable for artillery or cavalry, ran parallel to the rear of the line, and towards the right and centre the army had but one line of retreat practicable for wheel-carriages—viz., the Castlebom road—and the Coa was in its rear, the banks of which were precipitous throughout.[2]

[1] Lond. ii. 93-95.

[2] Brial. ii. 376.

6. Massena's reasons for resuming the offensive.

Massena was urged by every motive which could influence either a general or a soldier to assail the British in this position, and again carry the war into the Portuguese territory. He had incurred, as has been seen, the high displeasure of the Emperor for his conduct of the preceding campaign, and he had himself been deeply mortified by its calamitous results. His army, though disorganised and in want of everything when it left Portugal, had been much restored by a few weeks' rest and the stores found in Ciudad Rodrigo. Marshal Ney, whose insubordination had

CHAP. VI.

1811.

been such a source of vexation in the preceding campaign, after being superseded by Massena, had been recalled to France by the Emperor, and replaced by Marshal Marmont, an officer of superior abilities, and of a much more tractable disposition. Add to this that Napoleon had, soon after the former orders, sent a despatch which, in truth, left him no alternative but immediately to resume hostilities.

7. Necessity of relieving Almeida and Badajos.

Everything, therefore, urged the French marshal to make another effort to restore affairs in the Peninsula; and in addition to it, affairs on the frontier had become so pressing as not to admit of an instant's delay. Wellington had just gone to take the command of three divisions to the south of the Tagus, with which he had undertaken the siege of Badajos. Almeida, closely blockaded, was already in great want of provisions, and must ere long capitulate if not relieved and revictualled. On the other hand, a successful irruption into Portugal, now that the Commander-in-Chief and part of the army were absent, would, in the first instance, relieve Almeida, and, in its ultimate results, in all probability render unavoidable the withdrawing of the troops from the banks of the Guadiana, the raising of the siege of Badajos, and the restoration, by a last success, of the lustre of the Imperial arms over all Europe. Impressed with these ideas, and in truth having no longer a choice on the subject, Massena concentrated his army, and having with infinite difficulty collected a convoy of provisions to revictual Almeida, he recrossed the Agueda, and on the 1st May advanced towards Almeida.[1]

[1] Koch, vii. 474-481.

8. Forces on both sides.

The forces with which the opposite generals had to contend, when the campaign was renewed at this time, were as follows: Massena had 42,123 men and 8476 horses, of which 39,479 were present with the eagles, with 42 guns. In addition to this, he might reckon on the co-operation of Marshal Bessières, who, with his part of the Imperial Guard, 15,000 strong, was at no great distance

in the rear, and in point of fact took no inconsiderable part in the campaign which followed. Wellington's force, after the large deductions made to the south with Beresford, was only 29,000 of all arms, including Portuguese, of whom not more than 1600 were cavalry[1]—a vast disproportion, considering the homogeneous nature of the French army, contrasted with the varied character of the Allied; that a considerable part of the enemy's cavalry consisted of the horsemen of the Imperial Guard, the very best troops in their whole army; and that the Allies required to make a deduction of at least 3000 men to maintain the blockade of Almeida, the relief of which was the first object of the invasion.[2]

[1] Lond. ii. 103.

[2] Ibid.

9. Attack of Massena on Fuentes d'Onore. May 3.

Towards the evening of the 3d, the 6th French corps, now under the command of Loison, made its appearance in three lines on the heights, which on the east overhang Fuentes d'Onore. They immediately opened a heavy fire upon the village from the heights above, and soon after made a determined attack with a strong column of infantry upon it. The assault was met in the most gallant manner by Lieutenant-Colonel Williams, at the head of a battalion of light companies. The French, under General Ferrey, however, were formed in three columns of attack, and they pressed on with such vigour and superior numbers that that gallant battalion was obliged to give ground. Williams was wounded, and a few men made prisoners. The light infantry battalion of Nightingale's brigade, commanded by Major Dick of the 42d; the light infantry battalion of Howard's brigade, commanded by Major M'Donnel of the 92d; and the light infantry battalions of the King's German Legion, commanded by Major Aly of the 5th; and the second battalion of the 83d, under Major Carr,—were upon this brought up, and maintained a desperate fight with the assailants, skilfully availing themselves of every cover which the cross-walls and buildings afforded. The French, however, gradually gained ground, and Ferrey had reached the centre of the

CHAP. VI.

1811.

village, when the 71st Highlanders, under Colonel Cadogan, advanced to the charge. "Now my lads," said Cadogan, "let us show them how we can clear *the Gallowgate.*"* With these words, and loud cheers, the Highlanders rushed forwards. The French bravely stood their ground, and for the first and perhaps the last time in the Peninsula were the bayonets actually crossed. The struggle, however, was only of a few seconds' duration—the French were driven back literally at the bayonet's point; and so violent was the shock that some who stood their ground were spiked and borne back some paces on the British bayonets! Ferrey was by this vehement onset driven out of the village; but Massena soon after brought up fresh troops, and Ferrey having arranged four columns of attack, a fresh assault was made, which for the time proved irresistible. The British were in their turn expelled from the village; but Wellington, having observed the victorious French emerging on the opposite side, fell upon them when disordered by success, and with the aid of the 71st, 79th, and 24th, under Colonel Cameron of the 79th, drove them back into the village, where a desperate hand-to-hand encounter took place in the streets. "The French," says Sir Charles Stewart, "fought with great gallantry, and more than once stood to be bayoneted by our soldiers in the main street of the village; but their success, whenever obtained, lasted but a moment, and they were instantly swept away by a desperate charge from the men whom they believed that they had overcome. The 71st, which had repeatedly attacked and overthrown columns of French troops on the road, were tempted, towards dusk, by the appearance of what they conceived to be a gun on the opposite acclivity, to rush across the rivulet and become the assailants in their turn.[1] Nothing could be more impetuous, and yet more orderly, than this charge; they

[1] Lond. ii. 101, 102; Koch, vii. 527-529; Wellington to Lord Liverpool, May 8, 1811; Gurw. vii. 515; Thiers, xii. 656.

* Alluding to a well-known street in Glasgow, where the barracks are situated, and where the 71st had recently before been quartered, and obtained great numbers of recruits.

literally bore down everything before them; . . . . and though severely galled by a murderous fire of musketry and grape, they regained Fuentes d'Onore in triumph with their trophy." It proved, however, to be only a tumbril.*

10. Arrival of the Imperial Guard, and renewal of the battle.

After this desperate shock, the French army remained quiet for a day, leaving the British in possession of their hard-won conquest. They were awaiting the arrival of Marshal Bessières with the redoubtable horsemen of the Guard, eight hundred strong, who, on the evening of the 4th, made their appearance on the ground with six guns, and excited a great sensation in both armies. At three on the following morning the French columns were all in motion, and at six they had reached the British light troops, and commenced the attack at all points. The weight of the enemy's attack was directed, under Loison, with the 6th, Ney's old corps, on the British right, beyond Nava d'Aver, where the ground, being level, afforded an advantageous field for the employment of their numerous and magnificent cavalry. Montbrun, with the reserve cavalry and a powerful artillery, was placed in the rear and on the left of the 6th corps, with orders to charge whenever a suitable opportunity might occur; and on the right of the same corps stood the 9th corps under Drouet, who, along with Ferrey's division detached from the 6th corps, was to make a false attack on Fuentes d'Onore, in order to distract the attention of the enemy, and hinder him from sending succours to his right, where the principal effort was to be made. Meanwhile the convoy intended for the relief of Almeida, escorted by twelve hundred men, was to be held in readiness to

May 5.

* A keen contest arose on this conflict in Fuentes d'Onore as to the crossing of bayonets, which was carried on in the pages of that able journal, the *Army and Navy Gazette*, in consequence of a statement similar to that given above having been given in the author's *History of Europe*, chap. lxiii. § 91. It was closed by the statement of an officer (Grattan) who *saw the thing*, and which, coupled with Lord Londonderry's testimony above given, who was also an eye-witness, is decisive of the point. The author was in error in saying that it was the *Imperial Guard* which was borne backward at the bayonet's point in the shock, for it was Bessières's *cavalry* of that body which alone was in the battle.

CHAP. VI.

1811.

advance on the right, under cover of General Reynier with the 2d corps, by Fort Conception, on the extreme British left, and penetrate into the beleagured fortress in that direction. The commanders of all the corps were warned that the general-in-chief would be found with Junot at the head of the 8th corps, in rear of Loison, and that the Imperial Guard, which had hitherto remained at Gallegos, would take a part in the action.[1]

[1] French General Orders, May 4, 1811; Koch, vii. 532-535.

11. Preparations for battle on the 5th by Wellington.

Wellington was only partially informed of these movements and preparations on the part of the enemy, which, for the most part, had been executed in the dark on the preceding night, and with all imaginable secrecy. He had become sensible, however, that though Fuentes d'Onore might be attacked, the principal effort would not be made in that quarter, and that his extreme right towards Nava d'Aver would be chiefly threatened; and on the evening of the 4th he moved the 7th division, under General Houston, to that quarter; and as the enemy were seen rapidly advancing large bodies to their left, opposite to the British right, the light division, with the cavalry under Sir Stapleton Cotton, moved parallel to them on the morning of the 5th, and still further strengthened the British right, now become the obvious point of attack. But in the last arm the enemy had a great and alarming superiority, for the French had concentrated on that wing twenty-nine squadrons, containing 3200 sabres, having among them 800 of the cavalry of the Imperial Guard, while the whole Allied cavalry in the field, including Portuguese, was only 1600, and in the number and weight of metal in artillery they enjoyed a similar advantage.[1]

[1] Wellington to Lord Liverpool, May 8, 1811; Gurw. vii. 516; Koch, vii. 531, 532; Lond. ii. 104, 105.

12. Battle of Fuentes d'Onore. May 5.

The first attack was made on Sontag's brigade, which held the wood on the extreme British right, and after a gallant and obstinate resistance it was carried, and the retiring troops driven out in some disorder; while, at the same time, Don Julian Sanchez's guerillas, who were on the right of all, fell back in great confusion. Seeing

this, and deeming it necessary to move in order to cover the retreat of the foot-soldiers, as well as to hinder themselves being outflanked, the cavalry descended from a commanding position, in which they had been drawn up, into the plain. They were immediately charged in the low ground by the enemy's horse; but the assailants were driven back by the leading squadron of the British horse under Sir Charles Stewart, who made Colonel La Motte, of the 13th Chasseurs, prisoner in single combat. The enemy, however, succeeded in establishing themselves on the heights which had been abandoned, and from them opened so heavy a fire from some pieces of horse-artillery which they brought up, that the position of the troops on that part of the line was no longer tenable, and a retrograde movement to draw the foot-soldiers out of the range became indispensable. A retreat, accordingly, was commenced, but how to effect it on level ground, and in the face of a powerful cavalry, to which the Allies had nothing of equal strength to oppose, was a matter of no small difficulty. The light division, which had advanced to support the cavalry, now hard pressed, finding the post already evacuated, wheeled to the right, and moved towards Houston's division, which was slowly retiring, firing all the way. During this movement, however, they were repeatedly and fiercely charged by Montbrun's dragoons, and one small body formed by the rallying of the skirmishers in front, who had not time to get into the regimental square, was broken, thirty men cut down, and several prisoners taken, among whom was Colonel Hill of the 3d Guards. The main body, however, retreated in squares in the finest order, alternately halting and firing; and the Chasseurs Britanniques exhibited a rare example of discipline and valour by taking post behind a long ruined wall, where they received a charge of cavalry *in line*, which they repulsed by a steady and well-directed fire, which secured the retreat of the division, which before that had been endangered. The horse-artillery guns

CHAP. VI. 1811.

too, under Norman Ramsay, though often enveloped in a whirlwind of cavalry, emerged, "bounding," says Napier, "like things of no weight, out of the throng," got clear off, and, wheeling about, renewed their fire. Massena, seeing the efforts of the cavalry checked by the steadiness of the infantry and the fire of the guns, sent for the artillery of the Guard, which had not yet engaged, to advance and open fire. But the commander refused to obey the order, on the ground that he could only follow those of his own superior, the Duke of Istria (Bessières); and an hour was lost in consequence before four pieces, sent up by Massena, could arrive at the scene of action. When they did come, they opened a terrible discharge on the retreating regiments of Houston, and his squares of bayonets were often lost sight of amidst the forest of uplifted sabres; but they pursued their way steadily and unbroken, and at length both divisions, covered by the cavalry under Cotton, were withdrawn in safety to the banks of the Turones, and took up their ground on a new position selected by Wellington, extending along a line of heights running between the Dos Casas and the Turones, at right angles to both streams, and across the latter to Frenada, still covering the approach to Almeida.[1]

[1] Wellington to Lord Liverpool, May 8, 1811; Gurw. vii. 516, 517; Lond. ii. 105, 106; Koch, vii. 535-538; Brial. by Gleig, ii. 379, note.

13. Desperate conflict in Fuentes d'Onore.

While this severe action, attended with various success, and an entire change of position on the part of the British, was going forward on their right, the village of Fuentes d'Onore, on their left, was the theatre of a conflict as desperate as any which occurred in the whole Peninsular war. The attack there was made by General Ferrey in front, supported by Claperede's division of the 9th corps in flank. The village was held by the 79th and 71st Highlanders, with the 24th Regiment, the whole under Colonel Cameron, supported by the same light infantry battalions which had so nobly held it during the first attack. In spite of all their efforts, however, these brave troops were driven from house to house and from wall to wall, till the French had got possession

of the whole lower part and centre of the village, the British holding only the upper part. Upon seeing this, Wellington brought forward the 74th Highlanders under Major Manners, and the 1st battalion 88th, under Lieutenant-Colonel Wallace; and these fresh regiments, with the 71st and 79th Highlanders, by a headlong charge, drove the French entirely out of the village, which permanently remained in their possession, with the exception of a small portion of the lower part, where the French regained their ground, and the firing continued till night-fall.[1]

[1] Lond. ii. 107; Wellington to Lord Liverpool, May 8, 1811; Gurw. vii. 518; Koch, vii. 529; Brial. ii. 380.

14. Massena retreats without a further attack.

It was now five o'clock, and Massena, successful on his left, and partially so in the centre, though repulsed on his right, was meditating a fresh attack on the new British position, stretching on the crest of the ridge between the Dos Casas and the Turones, when a report from General Eblé of the Engineers made him hesitate as to whether ammunition enough for a second battle remained, especially for the artillery. In consequence of this, the attack was suspended till the following morning at five, and meanwhile the convoy of provisions intended for the relief of Almeida was ordered to return from Marialva to Alameda, and the caissons were sent back to Ciudad Rodrigo to be replenished. In the evening Wellington was not idle. Fatigued as his men were by a day's fighting, he set them to work to strengthen their position by earthworks; and with such diligence was this done that before dark the mattock and the spade had raised very considerable defences. In the course of the night a violent scene ensued between Massena and Bessières: the latter contending that the order for the caissons ordered back to Ciudad Rodrigo should be recalled, as the horses drawing them would infallibly be lost from fatigue, if it was insisted on; the former complaining that any such change would deprive him of a victory which was already within his grasp. The matter was decided by the discovery that the troops, without a fresh supply, had only half

CHAP. VI. 1811.

rations for the following day. The consequence was, that the caissons set out at daybreak, with orders to bring up, not ammunition, but bread; all thoughts of renewing the battle or relieving Almeida were laid aside, and the army retreated at all points towards Ciudad Rodrigo, after remaining a day inactive on the field, during the 6th, as if to give him some ground for claiming the victory, which he took credit for in a proclamation to his troops.[1]

[1] Koch, vii. 540-543.

15. Lord Londonderry's reflections on this battle.

The battle of Fuentes d'Onore was the most critical in which Lord Wellington was engaged in the whole war, and in which the chances of irreparable defeat were most against the British army. Sir Charles Stewart has left the following judicious reflections on this battle: "Massena's superiority to us, both in cavalry and artillery, was very great; whilst the thick woods in our front afforded the most convenient plateau which he could have desired for the distribution of his columns unseen, and therefore disregarded. Had he rightly availed himself of this advantage, he might have poured the mass of his force upon any single point, and perhaps made an impression before we could have had time to support it. Had he commenced his attack with a violent cannonade, it must have produced some havoc, and probably considerable confusion, in our line. He might then have moved forward his cavalry *en masse*, supporting it by strong columns of infantry; and had either the one or the other succeeded in piercing through, our situation would have been by no means an enviable one. . . . Had he thrown his cavalry round our right flank—a movement which we should have found it no easy matter to prevent—crossed the Coa, advanced upon our lines of communication, and stopped our supplies, at the moment when, with his infantry, he threatened to turn us; then pushed upon Sabugal and the places near, he might have compelled us to pass the Coa with all our artillery at the most disadvantageous places, and cut us off from our

best and safest retreat. There was, indeed, a time during the affair of the 5th, when his design of acting in this manner was seriously apprehended; and Lord Wellington was in consequence reduced to the necessity of deciding whether he should relinquish the Sabugal road or raise the blockade of Almeida. But Lord Wellington's presence of mind never for a moment forsook him. He felt no distrust in his troops; to retain his hold over a secure and accessible line of retreat was therefore to him a consideration of less moment than to continue an operation of which the ultimate success could now be neither doubtful nor remote; and he at once determined to expose Sabugal rather than throw open a communication with Almeida. It was a bold measure, but it was not adopted without due consideration, and it received an ample reward in the successful termination of this hard-fought battle."[1]

[1] Lond. ii. 109, 110.

16. This was a turning-point in Sir Chas. Stewart's fortunes.

"Throughout these operations," said Wellington in his official despatch to Lord Liverpool, "I have received the greatest assistance from Sir Brent Spencer and all the general officers of the army, and from the adjutant and quartermaster-general, and the officers of their respective staffs."[2] The Adjutant-General, Sir Charles Stewart, had borne a distinguished part in them; so much so, indeed, that they proved a turning-point in his fortunes. He had been in the battle wherever danger was greatest: he had been beside the 71st in the desperate bayonet-fight in Fuentes d'Onore on the 3d; and alongside of Sir Stapleton Cotton, he had, with a few English squadrons, stemmed the furious onslaught of Montbrun's vastly superior cavalry, and gained time for the infantry to fall into square and commence their methodical retreat on the 5th. The gallantry with which he had unhorsed and made prisoner Colonel La Motte of the 13th French Chasseurs, in single combat, had attracted universal notice; but the experienced and discerning eye of Wellington had ere this discovered in him talents of a peculiar kind, admirably

[2] Gurw. vii. 520.

CHAP. VI. 1811.

fitted for a high situation, partly diplomatic, partly military, which, it was foreseen, might ere long require to be filled up at the northern courts. Chivalrous and high-bred in his manners, he was as well calculated to insure the favour of the sovereigns and elevated officers with whom he might be there brought in contact, as, from his just military *coup d'œil*, he was to command the respect of the generals, and by his personal gallantry and daring, to win the confidence of the private soldiers with whom he might be called upon to act. Fortune, or rather his own high deserts, were in consequence preparing for Sir Charles Stewart a more elevated sphere of action than he had hitherto enjoyed; and it was among the rocks of Busaco, and the cavalry fight of Fuentes d'Onore, that the qualities were developed which shone forth with such lustre in the redoubts of Dresden and on the field of Leipsic.

17. Massena's orders to Brennier to evacuate Almeida. May 10.

But though the battle of Fuentes d'Onore was attended with such important consequences personally to Sir Charles Stewart, as well as generally to the war, it was at the moment attended by an event in the highest degree mortifying. For some days after the battle it was not positively known whether the attempt to raise the blockade of Almeida would not be resumed, and the army was busily employed in strengthening the defensive position they had assumed at the close of the fight to maintain it. On the

May 10.

10th, however, unequivocal symptoms of a retreat on the part of the French army were manifest, as there was only a screen of light troops left in their position. The British officers and soldiers in consequence deemed the capture of Almeida now certain, as it was known it had only provisions to the 15th; and they looked forward to this conquest with great complacency, both as a trophy of the campaign, and as affording a solid basis for future operations. In these expectations the Commander-in-Chief fully concurred, and he only awaited the surrender of this fortress to hasten to the south and prosecute his

long-cherished designs against Badajos. But an unexpected event dashed all these hopes, and deprived the English general of the triumph for which he had fought so hard, and which he was so well entitled to expect. No sooner had he come to despair of raising the siege by main force, than the French general sent orders to the governor of the fortress, General Brennier, to blow up the works, and make the best of his way off by Barba del Puerco. This order was made out in triplicate, and delivered to three trusty messengers: the two first went disguised, and never reached their destination; the third, André Tillet, a chasseur of the 6th Light Infantry, set out in uniform, armed only with his sabre, and he reached Almeida in safety. Brennier immediately set himself to work, with zeal and ability, to execute his instructions. The prescribed salvoes of guns were fired at the appointed time, warning Massena that his orders had been received, without attracting attention in the British camp; and at half-past eleven, on the night of the 11th, a tremendous explosion was heard far and wide, and soon after it was whispered in the English army that the garrison of Almeida had blown up the place, and was marching in good order towards Barba del Puerco.[1]

[1] Koch, vii. 546-548; Lond. ii. 113, 114; Wellington to Lord Liverpool, May 14, 1811; Gurw. vii. 548.

18. Blowing up of Almeida, and escape of Brennier.

The bridge over the Agueda at this place was the obvious line of retreat for the garrison, and where, accordingly, the 2d French corps was in readiness to receive it. Although, however, Brennier's measures were taken with equal skill and foresight, and executed with decision, he did not get back unscathed. General Campbell, a zealous and gallant officer who had greatly distinguished himself at the battle of Talavera, had been intrusted, with the 6th division, which he commanded, with the blockade of the place, and at his own earnest request he had received the entire direction. Unfortunately, he misapprehended the direction in which the escape of the garrison would be attempted; and instead of occupying in force Barba del Puerco, commanding the bridge over the Agueda

CHAP. VI.

1811.

leading direct from the fortress to the French lines, he watched with attention only the right face of the town, from which no movement was likely to be made. So obvious was this misconception, that on the 11th the 4th Regiment from Erskine's division was ordered up to occupy the heights above that place: but it was too late; the enemy had already passed. Marching under the best direction, without a light and in profound silence, between the British pickets, they contrived to pass undiscovered for two hours, until the explosion at Almeida awakened every one in the army. They were then discerned, and a small body of cavalry attacked them on the right, while Pack on the left was redoubling his pace to reach Barba del Puerco before them. It was a race in the dark who should first get there; and when the French uniforms in the grey of the dawn were first seen emerging from the gloom, General Heudelet, who commanded the troops placed near the bridge to receive them, advanced in double-quick time, and met the leading companies, whom they conducted across the bridge in safety. But the rearguard was not equally fortunate. Brennier had purposely put the waggons and baggage in the rear, in order to serve as a decoy to draw off the first of the pursuers, and this succeeded with some Portuguese squadrons, who broke, and began plundering; but some British horse soon came up, and Pack occupied in force the heights overhanging a gorge on the other side through which they had to pass before reaching the bridge. Heudelet's chasseurs lent them a powerful hand here, and the *fusillade* was soon extremely warm between the tirailleurs on the opposite sides; but meanwhile a heavy plunging fire was kept up from the top of the rocks on the column below, which sustained very heavy loss.[1] Two hundred and thirty French were driven over a precipice with forty Portuguese, the most of whom perished miserably; two hundred privates and ten officers were made prisoners; and fifty were slain on

[1] Koch, vii. 553-555; Lond. ii. 114-117; Wellington to Lord Liverpool, May 14, 1811; Gurw. vii. 548, 549.

the spot. Altogether the enemy lost above three hundred and fifty men, being about a third of their number, but the rest got clear off, after an exploit conducted with equal skill and gallantry, which gave great vexation to Wellington, but attracted general admiration in both armies.

19. Wellington despatches troops and stores for Estremadura.

Almeida, when it was entered by the British troops, was found to be in an extremely dilapidated state. Two of the five bastions of which the works consisted were indeed entire, from the accidental circumstance of the mines intended to be sprung having missed fire; but the other three were in a state of total ruin, and it was evident that considerable time and no small amount of labour and money would be required to put them in a posture of defence. Though deeply mortified at this result of his operations, Wellington and all his staff felt that it had now become comparatively of little importance for the future progress of the war. The recent victory had secured the north-eastern frontier from further insult, at least for a considerable time; and it was to the south, on the frontier of Badajos, that all eyes were now turned, as the destined theatre of important events. No sooner, accordingly, did Almeida fall than Wellington despatched the 3d and 7th divisions, under Picton and Houston, towards the Guadiana to reinforce Beresford, who, with a very inadequate force, was charged with the double duty of reducing that fortress and covering the siege operations against Marshal Soult, who, in obedience to the Emperor's orders, was advancing with a powerful army from Andalusia, not only to raise the siege, but to co-operate by an incursion into the Alentejo in the renewed attack on Portugal, of which Massena's advance to Fuentes d'Onore was a principal part. The remainder of the army was put into cantonments on the Agueda and the Coa, at Frenada, Fuentes d'Onore, Aldea de Ponte, and Gallegos, in such a situation as to observe Ciudad Rodrigo and cover the frontier, and left under

CHAP. VI.

1811.

command of Sir Brent Spencer; while Wellington himself, with Sir Charles Stewart and the whole etat-major, set out from Villa Formosa on the 15th of May, and travelled with the utmost expedition towards Elvas.[1]

[1] Lond. ii. 117-128.

20. Operations for the first siege of Badajos.

It was high time that Wellington should proceed to the south to take the command there, for affairs during his temporary absence in the north had become threatening in the extreme. So far back as 22d April, in consequence of directions given by the Commander-in-Chief himself, measures had been commenced for the siege of Badajos. Fascines, gabions, and other implements for it, had been prepared, although the approaches had been considerably retarded by a sudden rise of the river on the 24th, which swept away the bridge of casks which had been thrown across it. On the 29th, however, the communication was restored by means of flying

May 1. bridges, and on the 1st May the bridge of casks was

May 4. replaced more firmly than ever. On the 4th, General William Stewart invested the fortress on the left bank of the river, but the investment on the southern side was

May 8. not completed till the 8th, and then only with considerable difficulty, owing to the extreme inadequacy of the siege stores which were at the disposal of the General. The heavy artillery for the reduction of Fort Christoval, an indispensable preliminary to an attack on the body of the place, consisted of *three* twenty-four pounders, with three hundred rounds to each gun; and *two* howitzers, with two hundred rounds to each. *Mortars there were none.* Five hundred intrenching tools, two thousand sandbags, two hundred gabions, and a few planks, constituted the whole siege materiel provided for the reduction of one of the strongest fortresses in the south of Europe! The besieging corps consisted of one British brigade, two battalions of Portuguese of the line, and a battalion of militia—in all, four thousand men.[2] In addition to that, the ground upon which the working-parties had to com-

[2] Jones's Sieges, i. 24-27; Lond. ii. 123, 124.

mence their labour proved extremely hard and rocky; insomuch that, though four hundred men were employed on the trenches, ten men only were able to work under cover when daylight appeared! It may be conceived what progress was made in a siege attended with such difficulties, and with such means.

21. Progress of the siege, which is suspended.

Notwithstanding these difficulties, Marshal Beresford and his troops persevered most resolutely in the attack. On the 10th a sortie of the besieged took place, which, although attended at first with some success, was ultimately repulsed. The besiegers, however, following up their advantages with too much eagerness, got within the range of the guns of the fort over the glacis, in consequence of which, in a few minutes, four hundred brave men were struck down without any advantage to the Allies. Notwithstanding this loss, serious to so small a besieging force, the approaches continued to be vigorously pushed forward; on the 11th the three heavy guns opened their fire in the hope of effecting a breach in the smaller flank of Fort St Christoval, while the two howitzers strove to keep down the fire of the place. Nothing but defeat could be anticipated from such disproportionate means; and so it turned out, for before evening the three guns were silenced, and one of the howitzers rendered unserviceable. Still persevering even with means which rendered success hopeless, Beresford was renewing his efforts and constructing a fresh battery to breach the fort, when he learned that Soult was approaching with so powerful a force from the south as would strain the whole force at his disposal, including those engaged in the siege, to repel. He instantly took his line, and orders were given to disarm all the batteries, send the stores back to a place of safety, and march every disposable man to the defensive position at Valverde, there to await the attack of this fresh enemy.[1]

[1] Mem. de Joseph, vii. 398; Lond. ii. 125, 126; Lord Beresford to Lord Wellington, May 18, 1811; Gurw. vii. 573, note; Brial. ii. 391.

In effect, Soult, having collected 14,000 admirable troops in Andalusia, had advanced into Estremadura

CHAP. VI.

1811.

22. Forces on both sides.

where he formed a junction with Latour Maubourg, who brought to his standard about 5000 men; he then found himself at the head of 16,000 chosen infantry and 3000 of the finest horse; and with this force, and 40 guns, he advanced to raise the siege. The French marshal was full of confidence, and boasted in his letters to Berthier that he would soon have 35,000 men and 5000 horse with 50 guns in Estremadura, with which he would give battle to the whole English army, whom he had no doubt he should conquer. The Allied army had at first been ordered to assemble at Valverde, at no great distance from Badajos; but as that position left one road to that fortress open, it was determined on the 15th to make the rendezvous a little farther on, at ALBUERA, which better covered the approaches to it. Thither, accordingly, Marshal Beresford directed his steps; but in consequence of this change of position, to be taken farther in advance than had been originally ordered, and of the extraordinary rapidity of Soult, who came up by forced marches of eighteen miles a-day, the French were first assembled on the field of battle, and had occupied in force an extensive wood, of which the British commander had intended to have taken possession. The Allied troops came up to the ground irregularly, and some of them after very forced and fatiguing marches. Blake with his Spaniards did not arrive till three in the morning of the 16th, when he appeared with troops sadly jaded by a long and fatiguing night-march; Cole's division only appeared at nine on that day, after the battle had begun; Kemp's brigade and Madden's cavalry never came up at all. It was more by accident than anything else that there were troops enough to hold the position on the evening of the 15th till the remainder of the army successively came up and took their ground. The entire force of the Allies who took part in the action which followed were 7500 British, 8000 Portuguese, and 12,000 Spaniards—in all nearly 27,000 men. But the cavalry was very weak,

being not more than half the French, and the guns were only thirty-eight. On the whole, although the Allies had the numerical superiority, yet, considering the homogeneous character and perfect composition of the French force, and their decisive advantage in cavalry and artillery, the two armies were very equally matched; and thence, and from the desperate valour of the British and French forces engaged, resulted one of the most bloody and memorable battles in the whole war, or indeed in modern times.[1]

[1] Lond. ii. 129-131; Brial. ii. 391, 392; Joseph, vii. 399, 400; Beresford to Wellington, May 18; Gurw. vii. 573, 574.

23. Description of the field of battle.

"The position," says Sir Charles Stewart, "selected for the army was behind the little river Albuera, where the road from Seville to Badajos and Olivenza, after passing the stream by a bridge close to the village, separates into two branches. Here the ground rises from the river in gentle undulations, which, extending to the right, afford no single *point d'appui* more favourable than another, but tempt him who has already arranged his line along their summits to draw it out from hill to hill, and eminence to eminence." It was here that the Allied armies, with the exception of the 4th division, under Cole, which did not arrive till after the action had begun, were all assembled by four o'clock on the morning of the 16th. The French lay on the ground directly opposite to them; and as the two armies were quite concentrated, and the ground between them practicable at all points for all arms, it was evident that a desperate shock might be anticipated. The Allied army was drawn up in two lines, having the rivulet of the Albuera in its front: the Spaniards were posted on the heights on the right; General William Stewart's division in the centre; Hamilton's Portuguese on the left; Alten's brigade of Germans held the village and bridge of Albuera in front of the whole; and in rear of the centre, after the battle had begun, came up Cole's iron 4th division. The Spaniards on the right were brave troops, but so undisciplined that they could not be trusted to move under fire; and it had never been thought of to

CHAP. VI. 1811.

strengthen this part of the position, which consisted of heights, with field-works. On the side of the French, Girard's corps lay on the left, opposite to the Spaniards, on the Allied right; Godinot's division was in the centre, fronting the village of Albuera; while between the two the redoubtable cavalry of Latour Maubourg lay, with a fair field before them for charging. General Werlé's division, with the light cavalry of General Briché, were in reserve in the second line; while the numerous guns under Ruty were advantageously massed on the left of the line, either to support attack or cover retreat as circumstances might require.[1]

[1] Lond. ii. 130-132; Brial. ii. 391, 392; Beresford to Wellington, May 18, 1811; Gurw. vii. 374; Joseph, vii. 400; Thiers, xii. 687.

24. Battle of Albuera. May 16.

The position chosen by Beresford was strong and well selected; but, unfortunately, he had not occupied, even with light troops, a wooded spur in advance of his right, which ran out towards the heights occupied by the French. The consequence was, that behind this projecting eminence the enemy were enabled to form their columns unseen by the British, and assail unawares and suddenly the right of their line. Soult skilfully availed himself of this advantage. About nine in the morning of the 16th, having got all his troops well in hand, he moved forward Godinot's corps against the bridge of Albuera in two heavy columns, while part of Latour Maubourg's cavalry formed on their left an imposing mass. All eyes were instantly turned in that direction, and every preparation was made to resist the onset where it seemed to be directed. But, meanwhile, Girard's corps, reinforced by the main body of Latour Maubourg's horse, concealed by the spur above mentioned, was formed on the French left, close to the Spaniards, who, as already mentioned, stood on the right of the position. The attack was made with the utmost impetuosity and loud cries; but the Spaniards, though worn down by fatigue, and starving to such a degree that they were deserting in great numbers to avoid dying of hunger, and had eaten nearly all their horses, yet opposed a stout resistance. Incap-

able of moving, they could not change their front to meet the flank French attack; but they stood firm on their ground, and, if they had had the shelter of the rudest field-works, they might perhaps have held it. As it was, however, after a rapid exchange of volleys for a few minutes, they were obliged to retire, which they did in tolerable order. This success, however, was very important to the French, for it not only made them masters of the heights on the right, which were the key of the Allied position, but it laid bare the only good road, that to Valverde, by which the Allies could retire, and exposed them to the risk of being hemmed in between the Albuera stream and the enemy's columns, with no line of retreat practicable for artillery.[1]

[1] Lond. ii. 132, 133; Brial. ii. 393, 394; Beresford to Wellington, May 18, 1811; Gurw. vii. 574, note; Joseph, vii. 399, 400.

25. Gallant attack of Stewart's division.

Upon this, Beresford, after having made the most gallant efforts, though in vain, to bring back the Spaniards to the charge, ordered up General William Stewart's division to the right, to endeavour to regain the heights. These splendid troops passed in close array through the throng of the retreating Spaniards, and having at length gained room to deploy, the first brigade, consisting of the Buffs, the 66th, the 2d battalion 48th, and 31st, under Colonel Colbourn, advanced in line up the hill to dislodge the enemy, who were still in column on the summit. "Their advance," says Sir Charles Stewart, "was spirited, and their fire admirably directed; but before they could approach within charging distance, the enemy's cavalry broke in upon their right. One wing of the Buffs was now directed to be thrown back." But before the movement could be completed, the Polish lancers were upon them, by whom they were violently driven backwards on Houghton's brigade, which was in support. Unfortunately, it was in the act of deploying when this was done, and at first, in consequence, could afford no adequate assistance. The consequence was that Stewart's brigade "suffered terribly, as well by a tremendous fire of grape which was poured upon them as from the

CHAP. VI.

1811.

the cavalry, which rode through and cut them up at their leisure. The Buffs, 66th, and 48th were, indeed, annihilated, and the 31st escaped a similar fate only because, being on the left, it had time to form, and was thus enabled to show a regular front to the enemy."[1]

[1] Lond. ii. 133, 134.

26. Gallant advance of Houghton's brigade.

Undismayed by this terrible spectacle, Houghton's brigade, consisting of the 57th, 1st battalion 48th, and 29th, bravely advanced through a fearful fire to the theatre of conflict, where the 31st, still unbroken and in line, maintained a desperate contest against fearful odds. Nothing could exceed the gallantry with which they advanced under their heroic leader, who fell pierced by several balls, supported by the 3d brigade under the Hon. Colonel Abercrombie, consisting of the 28th, 34th, and 39th. The enemy, however, were now firmly established in great strength on the heights, from which it seemed impossible to dislodge them. The strife here was long and bloody in the extreme, for neither party would recede; and the dauntless antagonists, standing within half-musket-shot, interchanged, without flinching, destructive volleys with each other. Though greatly superior in number at this point, the loss of the French was far heavier than that of the British; for the former, being in column, presented a mark on which the shot nearly all took effect; whereas the latter, being in line, sustained a loss which, though great, was not in proportion so serious. But despite all their efforts, under Colonel Inglis of the 57th, and Major Way of the 29th, who headed them with the utmost gallantry, disaster, widespread and disheartening, was here rapidly overtaking the British arms. The dragoons of Montbrun, with the Polish lancers, rode slashing and stabbing in every direction, except where some of the regiments still stood firm, over the field; great numbers of prisoners had been taken, six stand of colours—those belonging to the Buffs, 66th, and 48th, regiments—were lost, and a whole brigade of artillery had fallen into the enemy's hands.[2]

[2] Lond. ii. 134, 135; Thiers, xii. 689; Beresford to Wellington, May 18, 1811; Gurw. vii. 575, note.

27. Glorious charge of the Fusilier brigade under Cole, which regains the day.

All seemed lost, and the battle wore so unpromising an aspect that the British commander was taking measures to secure a retreat, when a happy inspiration seized a young staff-officer attached to the Portuguese army, reserved for great destinies in future days, Colonel, afterwards LORD HARDINGE, Quartermaster-General of the Portuguese forces. Determined to make one effort more to snatch victory from the enemy's grasp, he took upon himself to order up the fusilier and a Portuguese brigade, under General Cole, which, as already observed, had only reached the field of battle after the action had been already engaged, having marched all night from the neighbourhood of Badajos, and were in reserve behind the centre to the right, to endeavour to regain the fiercely-contested heights. These noble troops, though sorely fatigued with their night-march, advanced in the finest order, and with unshrinking resolution, into the desperate *mêlée*, under their heroic leaders, Cole and Myers, in line against the French columns. All that remained unbroken of the troops which had already been engaged here joined the line, the fusiliers steadily pressing on, firing all the way, in front, the remains of Stewart's division in flank. The result must be given in the words of the eloquent French historian: "These troops," says M. Thiers, "advanced; the one deployed in line, the other formed *en potence* on the flank. The division Girard thus found itself assailed in front and flank by the steady and murderous fire of the British infantry. In a few minutes nearly all the officers were killed or wounded. To have replied on equal terms to the double fire of the English, it would have been necessary to have deployed, and formed two sides of a square; but the two divisions were so near that this was impossible, and they were obliged to retire to escape from a butchery as ruinous as it was useless."[1] The steady ceaseless fire of the fusiliers, admirably supported by Abercrombie's brigade and the Portuguese under Colonel Harvey,[2] swept

[1] Thiers, xii. 689, 690.

[2] Lond. ii. 135; Thiers, xii. 690; Brial. i. 394, 395; Beresford to Wellington, May 15, 1811; Gurw. vii. 575.

CHAP. VI. 1811.

away every attempt at extending into line; the British soldiers, raising loud shouts as they saw the enemy's confusion, pressed incessantly forward, and at length drove them headlong down the hill.*

28. Victory of the British.

The battle was now gained, but the French general ably and gallantly covered the retreat. Latour Maubourg's dragoons rapidly advanced in close order, and threatened in the most formidable manner the right flank of the fusiliers, while Ruty quickly disposed his guns on some heights in the rear, so as to cover the retreat. Menaced in this manner both in front and flank, the victorious brigade was obliged to halt, and endure for some time the iron tempest, on the top of the hill. There, however, it stood firm, and its standards waved in proud defiance to the defeated enemy, whose masses, dark and threatening still, did not venture to make another attack on the blood-stained eminences. Farther to the left, several attacks were made by Godinot's division on the village of Albuera, in the direction of the bridge; but they were all defeated by the steadiness of the Portuguese regiments and Alten's light Germans, who lined the walls and approaches to it. Several bodies of horse showed themselves here; but their efforts, which were not in such force as those made by Latour Maubourg's heavy dragoons on the right, were all baffled by the 13th Dragoons and Colonel Otway's horse, supported by General Lumley's brigade, who, moving parallel to the enemy's squadrons, effectually prevented any impression being made in that quarter.[1]

[1] Lond. ii. 135, 136; Beresford to Wellington, May 18, 1811; Gurw. vii. 576; Thiers, xii. 690; Brial. i. 395.

* By a singular coincidence, on the very day on which these lines were written, the author received the following letter from one of the few survivors of the Fusilier brigade, who was present at this sanguinary battle: "Reading in your *History of Europe* the account of Albuera, you say that General Cole's division was 'still fresh when it came into action.' So far from this, we were at Badajos at eleven the preceding night, marched all night, and arrived on the ground just when the Polish lancers had driven the Spaniards and Houghton's division back. We were immediately ordered to charge by Colonel Hardinge." The writer of this letter has nine clasps, and was one of the forlorn hope at San Sebastian, and was noticed by General Blakeney as one of the best soldiers in the army.

Such was the battle of Albuera, one of the most glorious in which the British arms had ever been engaged, and in which the merits of the island warriors and their ancient rivals in military fame were most signally tried. It was extremely bloody on both sides; more so, indeed, than any battle of any nation during the whole Peninsular war. The loss on either part was immense. Out of 7500 British troops engaged, 4158 were killed, wounded, or prisoners; the Portuguese lost 389, and the Spaniards 1980—in all, 6527. The French lost still more: their casualties were no less than 8000 men. The instances of daring and heroic courage exhibited by the British in this battle never were exceeded. Beresford showed a noble example. "During the hottest of the action," says Sir Charles Stewart, "he exposed himself with a degree of intrepidity which could hardly fail of spreading an example of heroism around. He repeatedly dragged the Spanish officers from their ranks, compelling them to lead their men forward, and show them the way; and when individually charged by a Polish lancer, he grappled his adversary by the throat, and threw him from his saddle."[1] "Our artillery was admirably served; its fire was very destructive, and the men stood to their guns till many of them were sabred; indeed, there was not an officer or soldier in any department of the army who failed this day in doing more than his duty. The bravery of the 57th and 31st fell in no degree short of that of their comrades the fusiliers. These regiments, having ascended the height, stood their ground nobly against all the efforts of a column of French grenadiers. The enemy's fire thinned their ranks, but never once broke them; for, at the close of the action, the dead and wounded were found in two distinct lines upon the very spots which they had occupied whilst alive and fighting. They fought, too, in every imaginable order which infantry can be called upon to assume. They resisted cavalry in square, deployed again into line, received and returned repeated

29. Results of the battle on both sides.

[1] Lond. ii. 139.

CHAP. VI. 1811.

volleys whilst a few yards only divided them from their opponents, and at last carried everything before them by a charge with the bayonet. All this could not, of course, be done without a prodigious slaughter on both sides; indeed, the killed and wounded lay in masses so compact that full 7000 bodies occupied the space of a few hundred feet; and our artillery, when advancing towards the close of the day, were compelled to pass over them, deaf to their cries, and averting their gaze from the brave fellows thus laid prostrate in the dust."[1] All the guns taken were regained before the close of the battle, except one howitzer, and four of the standards lost were wrested from the enemy.

[1] Lond. ii. 137, 138.

30. Soult retires to Llerena, and Beresford resumes the siege of Badajos.

If any doubt could have existed as to the party entitled to claim the honours of this hard-won fight, it was soon dispelled by the conduct of the French after it was over. On the day following, the British, though not half of those who had fought on the preceding day, displayed their standards planted in the ground, as so many trophies, on the summit of the hill where so many brave men on both sides had fallen, and the French did not venture to disturb them. On the 18th Soult retired to Solano, a considerable distance to the rear, and in two days after he marched to Llerena, where ample pasture was to be found for his horses, abandoning all thoughts of disturbing the siege of Badajos. Upon this Beresford sent back Hamilton's Portuguese division, which had suffered very little in the battle, to observe that fortress on the south, while he himself, with the remainder of the army, took post at Almendralejo, to watch the enemy. Matters were in this state when Lord Wellington, with his whole staff, arrived at Elvas on the 19th, and received full and authentic accounts of the desperate shock which had taken place between the two armies. Though much concerned at the serious loss which had been sustained in the English ranks, which was the more to be regretted as the weak numbers and inefficient condition of the Portuguese

May 19.

troops had made the weight of the contest to fall almost entirely upon the British troops, he did not abandon his design of reducing Badajos. On the contrary, approving of all Beresford had done, as soon as the two divisions which he had ordered up from the banks of the Coa arrived at Elvas, he resumed the siege operations with more ample means, and on a greater scale, than had been practicable for Beresford's comparatively limited resources. On the 25th there were collected around the place 10,000 British and Portuguese regulars, 3000 Spaniards, and 2000 Portuguese militia, with 40 heavy guns. On that day Houston's division drove in all the enemy's posts on the right bank of the Guadiana, and invested Fort Christoval, while a flying bridge was thrown across the river, as at the last attack. On the left bank, where the Portuguese were already established, the third division, which marched from Campo Mayor, was stationed on the 27th, and the besieged were thus shut in on every side.[1]

May 25.

[1] Lond. ii. 142, 143; Thiers, xii. 691, 692; Brial. i. 398, 399.

The siege-train which Wellington had collected, though much more considerable than that which had been at the disposal of Marshal Beresford, was wholly inadequate. "It amounted," says Sir Charles Stewart, "to 40 pieces, among which were 4 ten-inch and 6 eight-inch howitzers. Of mortars we possessed none: 8, therefore, out of the 10 howitzers were directed to be used as such. The engineers' stores comprised 3500 intrenching tools, 60,000 sandbags, 600 gabions, a very few fascines, and an extremely inadequate quantity of splinter-proof timber and planks; whilst, independently of the officers, there were attached to the department 169 men of the line to act as overseers, 48 carpenters, 48 miners, and 25 rank and file of the corps of royal artificers. To oppose this force, there was understood to be in Badajos and in its outworks a garrison of 3000 men, amply provided with food and other stores for two months' consumption. Their artillery, too, was of a very excellent description.[2] It numbered full 150 pieces, from which a fire might, at almost any point,

31. Siege-train of Wellington, and stores.

[2] Lond. ii. 143, 144.

CHAP. VI.

1811.

be thrown out, infinitely superior to that which we could bring against it."

32. Description of Badajos.

"The large and fortified town of Badajoz," continues the same author, "stands upon the left bank of the Guadiana, having one-fourth of its *enceinte* washed by the river, which varies from about 300 to 500 yards in width, and secures all the space which it embraces from insult. Towards the land side its defences consist of eight regularly constructed fronts, connected by a good covered-way and glacis. The ravelines are, however, unfinished; but the fronts possess whole revetments, and the escarpe of the bastions is thirty feet in height, though that of the curtains is considerably lower. In advance of these fronts are two detached works—namely, the Pardaleras, a crown work, about 200 yards distant; and the Pecurina, a strong redoubt, 400 yards removed from the glacis. On the north-east side again, where an angle is formed by the junction of the river Revellas with the Guadiana, there is a hill measuring perhaps 120 feet in height, the summit of which is crowned by an old castle; and the walls of that castle, naked, weak, and only partially flanked, form part of the *enceinte* of the place. . . . It was against this point that our engineers determined to conduct one of their attacks, and it was here that they seemed to possess the best, if not the only, chance of ultimately succeeding." [1]

[1] Lond. ii. 145, 146.

33. Fort St Christoval.

"On the opposite bank of the Guadiana, and in a direct line with this ancient building, stand the heights of St Christoval, which measure in altitude little less than the hill of the castle itself, and may, from the peculiar shape and bearing of the latter eminence, be said completely to command it. The castle hill, it will be observed, forms a sort of inclined plane, which eases itself off towards the edge of the water; and hence a spectator from the summit of the heights of St Christoval is enabled to see with perfect accuracy anything which may happen to be going on within the walls of the castle. To hinder an enemy from availing himself of this advantage, a square fort of

above 300 feet per face has been constructed. It is strongly and regularly built, with a stone scarp twenty feet in height; and it is capable, from the rocky nature of the ground on which it stands, to offer a stout resistance, even when methodically besieged. Between it and the town, however, the communication is far from being good, inasmuch as it is carried on entirely by means of a long bridge, subject to be enfiladed, or by the still more precarious and insecure instrumentality of boats. Against this fort was the second attack directed; and the obstacles to be encountered soon proved to be as serious as, from the general appearance of the place, might have been expected."[1]

[1] Lond. ii. 146, 147.

34. Commencement of the siege. May 31.

All things being in readiness, so far as the limited means at the disposal of the Commander-in-Chief would permit, ground was broken before both the castle and Fort St Christoval on the night of the 31st May, Wellington commanding in person. The former operation passed undiscovered, and the men were under cover before they were detected by the enemy; but the latter were detected almost immediately after it began, and an incessant fire of round-shot and grape was kept up in the direction of the river. The working parties, however, bravely stood the storm, and by morning four distinct batteries, at different distances from the place, were marked out, and in part completed. On the 3d the guns opened, and a heavy fire was kept up on both sides for several days without intermission, or any sensible advantage being gained on either side. By the continuance of this fire several guns, and nearly all the howitzers, were rendered unserviceable, without any perceptible effect being produced on the walls of the castle, except that they were a little shaken. Two bastions, however, at length fell on the side of Fort Christoval, and filled the ditch with their ruins. Various reasons concurred to induce Lord Wellington to hazard an assault without delay on this fort; for reports were coming in from all quarters as to the enemy moving in great force to the

June 6.

CHAP. VI.

1811.

relief of the place; and a gallant action of the cavalry, under General Lumley, who was in advance of the covering army at Usagre, on the very day when the reinvestment took place, left no doubt that a decided movement by both Marmont and Soult was in progress to raise the siege. The inference was soon confirmed by later advices. It was ascertained that Drouet, with seventeen battalions and several squadrons, had set out from Salamanca, and that the whole of Marmont's army was preparing to follow. Soult lay in strength at Llerena and Villa Garcia, and the united force could have reached Albuera by the 12th, in such strength as to render the further prosecution of the siege impossible. In these circumstances there was not a moment to lose in determining on the assault on Fort St Christoval, and it took place on the night of the 6th June.[1]

[1] Sir Chas. Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, June 14, 1811, MS.; Marmont, iv. 43, 44.

35. Repulse of the storm of Fort St Christoval.

"The forlorn hope," says Sir Charles Stewart, "advanced about midnight," under the guidance of Lieutenant Foster of the engineers, and commanded by Ensign Dyas of the 51st, "and directed their operations against the part which appeared most assailable, namely, the right salient angle of the fort. By the fire of our batteries the palisades had all been destroyed; and as the counterscarp was little more than four feet in depth, it proved no obstacle to the assailants. They sprang into the ditch, and marched straight to the foot of the breach. But here a sad reverse awaited them. The enemy, labouring incessantly between dusk and the hour of attack, had removed the rubbish, and the escarp was found to stand clear nearly seven feet from the bottom of the ditch. The forlorn hope had no scaling-ladders, and, seeing this, they were about to return, when the stormers, 155 in number," led by Major M'Intosh of the 85th, "came up, and, having ladders, resolved to try an escalade. The ladders, however, proved to be four feet too short, and the consequence was, that the whole party was repulsed, with the loss of twelve killed and ninety-seven wounded."[2]

[2] Wellington to Lord Liverpool, June 13, 1811; Gurw. viii. 12, 13; Sir Charles Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, June 16, 1811, MS.

The English general now saw that, however pressing the

necessity of expedition, the siege could not be brought to a successful issue without the aid of a more powerful artillery than he had yet had at command. All that could be got, however, were seven iron guns, which were brought from Elvas on the 8th; and with these, and the whole pieces mounted which remained serviceable, numbering only seven guns and two howitzers, an incessant fire was kept up on the breach and its defences. Little progress was made against either, and the breach seemed nearly as difficult of access as ever; but as certain intelligence had now been received that Soult and Marmont were rapidly approaching, and would certainly form a junction and raise the siege on the 12th or 13th, it was resolved to try the fortune of a second assault. "We came to the conclusion," says Sir Charles Stewart, "that Badajos must either be reduced at once or not at all; because we could hardly pretend to continue the siege in presence of Marmont's and Soult's armies combined; and as little could we hope to fight them to advantage to the south side of the Guadiana, keeping the city in a state of blockade. That we might not, however, be exposed to greater hazard than was necessary, General Spencer," who had been left on the Agueda with four divisions, "received directions to move by Penamacor to Castello Branco, which place he was commanded to reach on the 12th, and to hold himself in readiness to form a junction with our corps at the shortest notice."[1]

36. A second assault on Fort Christoval is resolved on.

[1] Lond. ii. 157-161; Jones's Sieges, i. 278.

The second storm of St Christoval took place on the night of the 9th June. The assaulting column consisted of two hundred, twenty-five of whom formed the forlorn hope, guided by Lieutenant Hunt of the engineers, and again led by Ensign Dyas. Major M'Geechy commanded the storming party. At the signal given the men leapt out of the trenches and ran across the open; but on this occasion they were distinctly seen by the enemy, who opened a heavy fire of grape upon them from every gun which could be brought to bear. The brave Lieu-

37. Second assault of St Christoval, which is repulsed. June 9.

CHAP. VI. 1811.

tenant Hunt fell dead on the glacis, and though the troops leapt with their wonted gallantry into the ditch, yet the loss of the person who should have guided them proved fatal to the enterprise. The stormers got to the foot of the rampart with scaling-ladders twenty-five feet in length; but in the darkness, and without a guide, they applied them, not to the breach, but to a bastion near it, which was comparatively uninjured. The consequence was, that they were repulsed with the loss of 40 killed and 100 wounded. During the entire siege the loss of the Allies had been no less than 9 officers and 109 men killed, and 25 officers and 342 men wounded or made prisoners.[1]

[1] Lond. ii. 163, 164; Jones, ii. 280-284; Wellington to Lord Liverpool, June 13, 1811; Gurw. viii. 12, 13.

38. Raising of the siege, and forces on both sides. June 11.

On the day following this second repulse a despatch was intercepted and brought to Wellington, which clearly revealed the designs of the enemy, which was to collect their whole force in Estremadura for the purpose of raising the siege of Badajos, and pursuing their advantages by an incursion into the Alentejo; and on the same morning advices were received from General Spencer in the north, leaving no doubt of the advances of the army of Portugal in the same direction, which expected to be at Merida by the 15th. The united forces of the two armies was nearly 60,000 effective men; while the British, even all united, though on paper 49,000 strong, could not bring 30,000 into the field, there being no less than 12,500 in hospital, and 7000 unavoidably absent on detachment. The Portuguese again were only 25,000 on paper, of whom only 14,000 were in the field. Thus, though there was a great numerical superiority on the part of the French over the Allies, the advantage in point of real strength was still greater, for the Spaniards were equal to nothing, and the Portuguese, through the extreme imbecility of the regency and nearly all the authorities engaged, were in a very inefficient state. Thus the weight of the contest, as at Talavera and Albuera, would fall upon the British;[2] but, though perfectly aware of this circum-

[2] Lond. ii. 162, 163; Marmont, iv. 45; Wellington to Lord Liverpool, May 13, 1811; Gurw. viii. 14, 15.

stance, and feeling keenly the heavy loss sustained in English soldiers, Wellington gallantly resolved to offer battle to the united armies of the two marshals.

A great game now lay before the French generals, if they had had nerve to play it. Sir Brent Spencer's division had not arrived from Beira, when Soult and Marmont were already united near Merida, and by a rapid advance they might have overtaken Wellington before he arrived with an overwhelming superiority of force. Wellington, after raising the siege, halted some days at Albuera, in hopes of getting an opportunity of attacking Soult by himself; but this was prevented by the latter refusing his left, and moving to Almendralejo to join Marmont. Seeing this, and that he could not prevent their junction, the English general crossed the Guadiana on the 17th, the very day of the junction of the two French marshals, and took the route to Elvas and Campo Mayor. He halted, however, between these places, and took post on the two banks of the Caya, where he was joined by Spencer, and the whole army was assembled. The ground here was in part broken and unfavourable for the action of cavalry, in which arm the French had a great superiority, amounting to more than double. The situation of Wellington was very critical; his army, sorely reduced by the sword, sickness, and desertion, was fatigued by its long campaign, and somewhat discouraged by the failure both at Almeida and Badajos. The Portuguese army was in a most inefficient state. "Without pay, without provisions, without sufficient means of transport, the troops seemed to be rapidly falling back into their original disorganisation; whilst the commanders were involved in continual disputes and quarrels, as well with one another as with the regency and the court of Brazil."[1]

39. Wellington offers battle to Soult and Marmont, which is declined.

[1] Lond. ii. 166; Thiers, xii. 692.

In these circumstances the firm countenance of Wellington saved his army from destruction, and deprived the French generals of the fairest opportunity they had yet

CHAP. VI. 1811.

enjoyed of overwhelming the British. On the 20th June the whole army, including Spanish divisions, took up a position on very favourable ground, on both banks of the Caya, and remained there till the 26th, offering battle to the enemy. "Wellington," says Sir Charles Stewart, "anticipated a general action. He spoke of its probable occurrence, and took all the precautions to insure a victory which his genius pointed out; and as he possessed sources of information to which no other individual had access, there can be little doubt that he came to that conclusion on grounds perfectly reasonable. As to myself, I own that I considered the enemy had gained a great deal by the successful resistance of Badajos, more perhaps than in the present state of the campaign they had any right to expect; and as their troops stood at least as much in need of repose and reorganisation as ours, it appeared somewhat improbable that they would, for the sake of harassing us, deny to themselves that of which they strongly experienced the want."[1] Sir Charles Stewart proved right in his anticipations: the French generals declined the combat.

40. The French generals decline the conflict.

1 Lond. ii. 171, 172.

Both parties now put their armies for a short time into cantonments—a measure rendered indispensable by the fatigues they had undergone, and the heat of the weather, which had become excessive. Wellington, satisfied with having a second time saved Portugal, and made head against the united strength of the *two* armies, upon whose co-operation Napoleon had reckoned for its conquest, justly deemed it indispensable to give his wearied soldiers some weeks of repose. Soult, as soon as Badajos was put in a sufficient posture of defence, withdrew his troops to Seville, where he speedily drove back the guerrillas under Blake, who had threatened that city. Marmont, on his part, also falling back, spread his divisions in summer quarters on both banks of the Tagus, having the bridge of Almaraz as their centre of communication,[2] the fortification of which speedily assumed so

41. Both armies are put into cantonments.

June 27.

2 Lond. ii. 173-180; Marmont, iv. 49; Brial. i. 409, 410; Thiers, xii. 692, 693.

formidable a consistency as to put them beyond the reach of a *coup-de-main*.

42. Habits of the army when in these cantonments.

During the short intervals of rest in active service of a soldier's life, the enjoyments of peace and of rural or social life are perhaps more keenly enjoyed than in any other situation. The following letter from Sir Charles to Lady Stewart at this time, gives a pleasing picture of the life of the officers during this period of repose, and the manner in which they were received by the hospitality of their chief: "At headquarters we have been fortunate enough to become possessed of an excellent pack, which affords us much amusement, and occupies the time which otherwise might hang heavy on our hands; and into these minor considerations no man enters more heartily than our leader. It is during this summer that he has, for the first time, instituted the custom of throwing off at settled points, on established days in every week, when the army is not in the field; and the incidents replete with mirth, to which these meetings give rise, are too numerous to be recorded, though they will be long remembered. In our quarters, too, we live gaily and well. A spirit of hospitality and good-fellowship everywhere prevails, and in the midst of war, both private theatricals and agreeable parties are of continual recurrence. This system, while it deteriorates in no sensible degree from the discipline and efficiency of the troops, spreads abroad among those who are under its influence the very best dispositions and temper; and all learn to love the profession, even in the most trying moments, from a recollection of the many enjoyments of which it has been the source." [1]

[1] Sir Charles Stewart to Lady C. Stewart, July 10, 1811, MS.

But while the thoughts of all in the army save those in the immediate confidence of the Commander-in-Chief were set upon their amusements, and it was thought that no further operations would be attempted till the hot season had passed away, the mind of that great man was fixed upon an enterprise of the utmost importance, and

CHAP. VI.

1811.

43. Movement of the army to new cantonments on the Tagus, its reinforcement, and plan of operations.

which in the end proved successful. This was nothing less than the reduction of Ciudad Rodrigo, an essential preliminary to any offensive operations in Spain. To effect this, however, it was indispensable that the enemy should be taken by surprise; and to secure this the siege-train required to be moved to the vicinity of the fortress without his being aware of its approach. For this purpose Lord Wellington began openly, and in an ostentatious manner, embarking a siege-train, which had recently arrived from Woolwich, at Lisbon, in vessels which set sail from the Tagus professedly for Cadiz. Once at sea, and during the darkness of the night, the artillery was transhipped into smaller vessels, which steered for Oporto, while the larger vessels continued their course on to Cadiz and Gibraltar. From Oporto the siege equipage was moved, in a quiet way, by the Douro, as far as Lamego, where it was landed and dragged by oxen, with infinite difficulty and over execrable roads, to Celorico, on the frontier, where it was carefully concealed among a multitude of baggage-waggons. Such was the hostility of the whole rural population to the French, that, strange to say, not a rumour of these preparations reached Marmont. The siege-train having arrived and been placed in safety, Wellington broke up from his cantonments on the Caya, and, taking

July 21.

a northerly direction, crossed the Tagus at Villa-Velha, and, the better to conceal his real design, took up new cantonments, in which the army remained for a week, on either bank of that river. There they were joined by four regiments of foot and one of horse—the 26th, 32d, 68th, and 77th infantry, and 12th Dragoons; while General Graham arrived from Cadiz, and brought to the army the aid of great experience, high military talents, and a brilliant reputation. He received the command as second in the army around headquarters, General Hill being at the head of a detached corps, 10,000 strong, to the south of the Tagus.[1] Finding himself now, by these reinforcements, at the head of 40,000 men in hand, which

[1] Lond. ii. 183-193; Brial. i. 410, 411; Marmont, iv. 63, 64; Wellington to Lord Liverpool, Aug. 7, 1811; Gurw. viii. 173, 174.

he deemed adequate to cope with Marmont singly, and at the same time undertake the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo, even with the limited means at his disposal, Wellington, in the first week of August, broke up from the valley of the Tagus, and advanced first to Sabugal, and two days after to Fuente Guinaldo, and the whole army was collected in a loose and extensive line, extending from Villa Viciosa on the right to Gallegos on the left, menacing Ciudad Rodrigo on either bank of the Agueda. Aug. 1. Aug. 8. Aug. 10.

44. Ciudad Rodrigo is revictualled, and Wellington establishes a distant blockade.

It was impossible that the moving and concentrating of so large an army should not become known to the French generals; but, in ignorance of the siege-train which had been secretly conveyed to the neighbourhood, they imagined that a blockade only was in contemplation, and that if the place could but be supplied with provisions, it would be placed beyond the reach of danger. With such diligence did Marmont exert himself on this subject, that on the very day before the British army arrived before the place a convoy of provisions for two months entered it. This great supply rendered all hopes vain of an immediate reduction of the fortress by blockade, and the information which was at the same time received as to the strength of Marmont's army and those which he could rally to his standard, rendered it extremely hazardous to attempt its reduction by open force. It was impossible to attempt the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo with a force, including the late reinforcements, little more than half that of the enemy; and Wellington, therefore, wisely resolved to confine himself to a distant observation of the place, and to keep his men together, in the hope that want of provisions would ere long compel the enemy to separate, and that he might possibly strike a blow before they had time to reassemble.[1]

[1] Lond. ii. 196, 197; Brial. i. 44; Marmont, iv. 61-69; Wellington to Lord Liverpool, Aug. 27, 1811; Gurw. viii. 223-226.

45. Marmont resolves to revictual Ciudad Rodrigo.

This state of things continued, without any event of importance on either side, through the whole remainder of August and the first half of September; the British keeping up a blockade of Ciudad Rodrigo, which, though dis-

CHAP. VI.

1811.

tant, was sufficient to prevent any further introduction of provisions into the place; and Marmont's army being quartered in echelon, from the Tagus to the Col de Banos, with detachments as far as Tamames, in order to levy contributions all the way to Salamanca. At the end of this period, reinforcements under Dorsenne, 15,000 strong, including 12,000 infantry and 500 horse of the Imperial Guard, joined the French army, conveying along with them a huge convoy of provisions sufficient for the supply of Ciudad Rodrigo for eight months. On the other hand, towards the end of September, provisions began to grow scarce in the place, and it was known that they could not by any effort hold out, unless relieved, beyond the 10th October. In these circumstances Marmont resolved to concentrate his forces, and, availing himself of his great superiority of numbers, openly force the introduction of the convoy into the fortress. Orders accordingly were given to the troops to close up with all imaginable expedition from the rear; and the convoy, which was of huge dimensions, was placed in the centre of the long column. Wellington, however, had not been idle in the interim since his troops returned to the banks of the Coa and the Agueda. On horseback, with Sir Charles Stewart and his staff, nearly every day from sunrise till dusk, he had in person carefully studied the ground, both that on which the enemy would probably approach escorting the convoy, and that on which his own defensive struggle was to be maintained. His force was altogether inadequate to maintaining the blockade in presence of the concentrated French army; but he was in hopes, despite its great inferiority, of being able to maintain himself in a position he had selected near Fuente Guinaldo, and which he had strengthened by considerable field-works, and thus await an opportunity of striking an unexpected blow in the course of the winter, which was approaching.[1]

[1] Marmont, vi. 63, 64; Lond. ii. 206 208; Brial. i. 411, 412.

The appearance of the French army, with its great

convoy, is thus described by Sir Charles Stewart: "Wellington early determined to make his retreat by the great road which leads from Ciudad Rodrigo to Fuente Guinaldo. The divisions upon the more advanced chain accordingly received orders, in case of an attack, to retire, after having well disputed their ground, towards Fuente Guinaldo. Here it was expected that a more resolute stand would be made under cover of the redoubts and other works which had of late been thrown up; whilst, in the event of further falling back, everything was so settled that the movement could be executed at any moment, and with comparative security. Such was the order of the Allied army when, on the 24th of September, a considerable body of the enemy showed themselves in the plain before Ciudad Rodrigo. They came from the Salamanca and Tamames roads, and were accompanied by a countless number of waggons, cars, and loaded mules. Their progress was slow and apparently cautious; but towards evening the convoy began to enter the place, under cover of about fifteen squadrons of cavalry, which passed the Agueda, and a large column of infantry, which halted upon the plain. Still no symptoms were manifested of a design to cross the river in force, or to attempt anything further than the object which was thus attained; for the advanced cavalry withdrew at dusk, and all bivouacked that night near the town. In the morning, however, as soon as objects became discernible, one corps of cavalry, amounting to at least five-and-twenty squadrons, supported by a whole division of infantry, appeared in motion along the great road which, leading from Ciudad Rodrigo to Guinaldo, leaves El Bodon on the left; whilst another, less numerous, perhaps, but, like the former, strongly supported by infantry, marched direct upon Espeja. They both moved with admirable steadiness and great regularity; and as the sun happened to be out, and the morning clear and beautiful, their appearance was altogether very warlike and extremely imposing.[1]

46. Wellington's preparations, and advance of the enemy, who relieve Ciudad Rodrigo.

[1] Lond. ii. 208, 209.

CHAP. VI.

1811.

47. Approach to El Bodon.

"As it was not for some time ascertained whether strong reconnoissances only, or the advance of the whole French army, were intended, and as Lord Wellington felt great reluctance to abandon the heights of El Bodon and Pastores, unless threatened by numbers which it would have been useless to oppose, our troops neither shifted their ground nor made at first any general disposition to cover the points threatened by concentration. The enemy's columns, on the contrary, pushed on, not disregarded certainly, but as certainly without drawing us into any premature disclosure of our intentions, till the larger mass, which was moving towards Guinaldo, reached the base of some rising ground which was held by a portion of the third division. These troops instantly formed; and, though they consisted of no more than one British brigade, under General Colville, and one Portuguese regiment of infantry, the 9th, some pieces of Portuguese artillery, and four squadrons of General Alten's cavalry, they contrived to arrest, for a considerable space of time, the further advance of the assailants." This state of things led to the combat of El Bodon, one of the most brilliant, as Wellington justly observed, of the whole war, and in which Sir Charles Stewart, in command, as adjutant-general, of the cavalry, bore a conspicuous and most honourable part.[1]

[1] Lond. ii. 209, 210.

48. Sir Charles Stewart's account of the action.

"As soon," says he, "as it became distinctly manifest that an attack was in serious contemplation, our troops prepared to meet it with their accustomed gallantry and coolness. The infantry wheeled into line; the cavalry mounted and made ready to move wherever their presence might be required; whilst the artillery, redoubling their exertions, poured forth a shower of grape and case shot, which exceedingly galled and irritated the enemy. . . . The attack was begun by a column of cavalry, which charged up the heights in gallant style, cheering in the usual manner of the French, and making directly for the guns. Our artillerymen stood their ground resolutely, giving their fire to the last; but there being nothing immedi-

ately at hand to support them, they were at length compelled to retire, and the guns fell for a moment into the hands of the assailants. But it was only for a moment; for the 5th Regiment was ordered instantly to recover them. They marched up in line, and firing with great coolness; when at the distance of only a few paces from their adversaries, they brought their bayonets to the charging position, and rushed forward. I believe this is the first instance on record of a charge with the bayonet being made upon cavalry by an infantry battalion in line; nor, perhaps, would it be prudent to introduce the practice into general use; but never was charge more successful. Possessing the advantage of ground, and keeping in close and compact array, the 5th literally pushed their adversaries down the hill; they then retook the guns, and, limbering them to the horses, which had followed their advance, drew them off in safety."

49. Glorious cavalry action under Alten and Sir Charles Stewart.

While this was going on in one part of the field, repeated attacks were made in another upon the handful of cavalry under General Alten's orders, who, assisted with his usual gallantry by Sir Charles Stewart, manfully stood their ground against the squadrons, four times more numerous, of Montbrun's dragoons. "On all such occasions," says Sir Charles Stewart, "the assailants outnumbered the defenders by at least four to one, and they came on with the reckless bravery which is exhibited only by men accustomed to conquer; but nothing could exceed the steadiness of our cavalry, and their excellence became only the more apparent on account of the great odds to which they were opposed. There were present in this rencontre two squadrons of the 1st Hussars of the King's German Legion, with a similar number of the 11th Light Dragoons, between whom it was impossible to determine which performed feats of the greater gallantry. Indeed, I can personally attest that the single source of anxiety experienced by the officers in command, arose from an apprehension lest these brave fellows should follow the

CHAP. VI. 1811.

broken multitudes down the cliffs and precipices into which they drove them. To hinder this were the efforts of others and myself mainly directed, and it was not without considerable exertions that we succeeded. The action had continued in this state for some time, the enemy continually assaulting our front and left, and we as continually repulsing them, when Captain Dashwood, an active officer of the Adjutant-General's department, suddenly discovered a heavy column moving towards the rear of our right, round which it had penetrated unobserved, and therefore unresisted. Not a minute was to be lost; for even a moment's indecision would have enabled the French to accomplish their object of surrounding us."[1]

[1] Lond. ii. 212, 213.

50. Retreat of the British to Guinaldo, and their dangerous position.

Wellington's position was now in the highest degree precarious. The retreat of the troops which had occupied the heights of El Bodon to the fortified position of Fuente Guinaldo in the rear, a distance of several miles, was not accomplished without some loss and great danger. The four squadrons of British horse, pursued by an overwhelming force of hostile cavalry, were compelled to retire in haste to avoid being surrounded and cut off; and Colville's brigade of infantry, consisting of the 5th, 77th, and 83d, were exposed uncovered to the charge of Montbrun's dragoons. They retreated, however, in square, and in perfect order, repelling every charge when the enemy came near them by a rolling fire, and reached the positions unscathed. With truth did Wellington say in his official despatch, that the conduct of the 5th under Major Ridge, and of the 77th under Colonel Bromhead, afforded a memorable example of what the steadiness and discipline of the troops, and their confidence in their officers, can effect in the most difficult and trying circumstances. While this was going on on the right of the line, large masses of the enemy's infantry and cavalry bore down on the left; but they were successfully opposed by the 14th and 16th Dragoons,[2] who charged them with the greatest gallantry whenever an opportunity offered, and with such

[2] Brial. i. 415, 416; Lond. ii. 213, 214; Wellington to Lord Liverpool, Sept. 29, 1811; Gurw. viii. 229-305.

success, that the retreat of this part of the line to the fortified positions in the rear was effected without a gun being taken, a square broken, or squadron dispersed. Before midnight on the 25th the three central divisions were safely collected in the position of Fuente Guinaldo. But they were only 14,000 men, the wings being not yet come up, and they had the prospect of being assailed at daybreak by 50,000, including 13,000 of the Imperial Guard.

51. Splendid appearance of the French army here collected. Sept. 26.

"The night of the 25th," says Sir Charles Stewart, "was spent by us, as it is customary for soldiers to spend a night upon which they have reason to expect that a day of battle will rise—that is to say, the superior officers lay down in their cloaks upon the floors of the houses, whilst the men slept on their arms round large fires, which blazed along the range of the position. Long before dawn, however, all were astir and in their places, and the different regiments looked anxiously for the moment which should behold the commencement of a game as desperate as any which they had been yet called upon to play. But instead of indulging our troops as they expected, Marmont contented himself with making an exhibition of his force, and causing it to execute a variety of manœuvres in our presence; and it must be confessed that a spectacle more striking has rarely been seen. The large body of cavalry which followed us to our position, and had bivouacked during the night in the woods adjoining, were first drawn up in compact array, as if waiting for the signal to push on. By-and-by nine battalions of infantry, attended by a proportionate quantity of artillery, made their appearance, and formed into columns, lines, echelons, and squares. Towards noon twelve battalions of the Imperial Guard came upon the ground in one solid mass; and as each soldier was decked out with feathers and shoulder-knots of a bloody hue, their appearance was certainly imposing in no ordinary degree. The solid column, however, soon deployed into columns of battalions—a move-

CHAP. VI. 1811.

ment which was executed with a degree of quickness and accuracy quite admirable; and then, after having performed several other evolutions with equal precision, the Guards piled their arms, and prepared to bivouac. Next came another division of infantry in rear of the Guards, and then a fresh column of cavalry, till it was computed that the enemy had collected on this single point a force of not less than 25,000 men. Nor did the muster cease to go on as long as daylight lasted. To the very latest moment we could observe men, horses, guns, carriages, tumbrils, and ammunition-waggons, flocking into the encampment, as if it were the design of the French general to bring his whole disposable force to bear against the position of Fuente Guinaldo."[1]

[1] Lond. ii. 215-217.

52. Marmont declines battle.

The fate of the Peninsula was now in Marshal Marmont's hands. By his own admission he had 40,000 men, including 13,000 of the Imperial Guard, in one battle-field, within cannon-shot of the English army. Wellington stated the French army at 60,000 men, with 125 guns, including 22 battalions of the Imperial Guard; and if the enemy's force be stated at a medium of 50,000 men and 100 guns, it will probably be near the truth. Wellington had at the very utmost 15,000 men, in a position only strengthened by a few field-works. But the French generals, despite their immense superiority of force, were afraid to engage the British in a pitched battle in a favourable position; and Marmont, accordingly, spent the day in making a parade of this force, as in a review, before their enemies, while he himself was studying the English position. To the latest hour of his life he never ceased regretting that he had not fought instead of reconnoitring only on that occasion, for so favourable an opportunity never again occurred. The Imperial Guard, and a considerable part of the forces in the Peninsula, were soon after withdrawn to take part in the war against Russia.[2]

[2] Marmont, iv. 66; Gurw. viii. 305, 306.

The English general had his own reasons for stand-

ing firm under such hazardous circumstances before the enemy. By so doing he imposed upon them, and made them believe a much larger force was assembled to dispute any further advance on their part than was actually the case. In addition to this, there was a pressing, and, in fact, insurmountable reason, for holding the position during this day; for had he not done so, Craufurd, with the light division, would have been cut off. Wellington had ordered him to retreat from his advanced position on the Vadillo by Robleda to Guinaldo; but that general, mistaking the position of the enemy, had deemed it necessary to make a long circuit through the mountains. The French, however, were already in possession of the pass through them, and Wellington was obliged to send him orders to retrace his steps, and come by the Robleda road. This occasioned a delay of twelve hours, and it was not till next morning that he reached the position. He preserved, too, by this intrepid course, his own moral influence and that of his army, which otherwise might have been injured by the relief of Ciudad Rodrigo so soon following on that of Badajos.[1]

53. Retreat of the British, and its reasons.

[1] Brial. i. 416.

This object having been gained, there was no reason for prolonging the risk, and he resolved to retreat in the night to a position in the rear, where his junction with his remaining flank divisions might be effected more quickly. Accordingly, orders were given to move at midnight; and with such expedition were the directions obeyed, that at daybreak on the morning of the following day, when the French tirailleurs approached the British outposts, they found to their great surprise that the army had decamped during the night, and was already far advanced on the roads by Nava d'Aver and Bismula, to a new position where Wellington had resolved to make a stand, and where the whole army under his immediate command could be collected. This position was on a range of heights, or rather acclivities, between Rendoa and Soito, which offered an extremely favourable ground for defence, the Coa

54. Retreat of the British, and assembling of their whole army. Sept. 27.

CHAP. VI. 1811.

covering both flanks, and a retiring angle of the river forming its *point d'appui*. The approaches were difficult and exposed, and the natural defences shielded it much more effectually than the one at Guinaldo had done. Yet was the position in one respect full of danger: there was no secure retreat in case of disaster. "With a river," says Sir Charles Stewart, "like the Coa in our rear, it would have been absolutely necessary either to repel at all points the enemy's attacks, however formidable, or to perish; for the line once broken could not be withdrawn without suffering a loss which in our case must have proved fatal."[1] The selection of such a position for a pitched battle, which in other circumstances would have been a grave military error, was vindicated in Wellington's case by the well-grounded confidence which he felt in the quality of his troops, and the fact that the whole force to the north of the Tagus were here, for the first time since the attack on Badajos, assembled. The 5th division passed the Agueda at Navas Freas, and formed the right of the line; to its left was drawn up the 4th; the light stood above Soito; the 3d in front of Pouca Tarenha; the 1st and 6th at Rendoa, where the ground was peculiarly strong; the 7th, with the cavalry in a second line, in the rear—in all, 30,000 infantry, 2500 cavalry, and 46 guns: and with such a force, Wellington might well be excused by feeling confident against the army, fully a half greater, by which he expected to be assailed.[2]

[1] Lond. ii. 221.

[2] Brial. i. 416, 417; Marmont, iv. 66, 67.

55. The French decline the conflict.

Every one in both armies now expected that a pitched battle was at hand, the more especially as the retreat of the retiring columns had been severely pressed by Marmont's advanced-guard, with whom a sharp action had taken place at Aldea del Ponte, in which, although the British at first had the advantage, they were ultimately worsted in consequence of the gallant rearguard pursuing their advantages too far, and being driven back by a much superior body of the enemy. But it fell out otherwise:

Marmont, who had declined to attack fifteen thousand at Guinaldo, had not resolution to hazard this attack on double the number in the stronger position of Soito. He withdrew his troops accordingly during the night of the 27th; and on the morning of the 28th, Sir Charles Stewart, who went forward to reconnoitre, found only a rearguard of cavalry in possession of Aldea del Ponte, which they had won the evening before.

56. The French go into winter-quarters.

Though Marmont committed a great and irreparable mistake in not attacking the English at Fuente Guinaldo on the 26th, yet he was not to be blamed for not prosecuting his advantages or advancing into Portugal at that time. He had neither provisions nor stores necessary for such a forward movement. His object was in the first instance merely to revictual Ciudad Rodrigo, and after that was done to make such a reconnoissance as would enable him to see whether any preparations had been made for a regular siege of that fortress. It was only from finding the Allied army so scattered that he was tempted to bring up his whole force at Fuente Guinaldo, and had so fair an opportunity, which he let slip, of striking a decisive blow there. Finding the enemy all concentrated at Soito on the 27th, he gave up all thoughts of any further offensive movement at that time, and, retiring into Spain, distributed his great army into winter-quarters. Dorsenne with the Imperial Guard moved back to Salamanca and Valladolid; while Marmont, with the army of Portugal, went into cantonments around Placencia, and in the valley of the Tagus. On his side the English general, finding the enemy withdrawn, passed the Coa with the bulk of his troops, leaving only the 4th and light divisions to observe Ciudad Rodrigo and discharge the duty of light posts. The remainder of the army was put into cantonments, headquarters being established at Frenada.[1] But the billets were exceedingly small and incommodious, the rain fell in torrents, and the unhealthy autumnal months having now set in, the sick increased in

[1] Marmont, iv. 67, 68; Lond. ii. 226, 227; Wellington to Lord Liverpool, Oct. 9, 1811; Gurw. viii. 326.

CHAP. VI. 1811.

an alarming degree. Fevers and agues were very general; scarce a regiment could show two-thirds of its numbers on parade; and the sick in the hospitals of the British alone swelled to the enormous number of sixteen thousand.

57. Wellington's projects at this time.

During the period of apparent rest which followed, the active mind of the British chief enjoyed no relaxation, and he was incessantly engaged in projects to turn to the best account the favourable aspect which affairs were assuming from the events in progress in the north of Europe. During the autumn, Napoleon withdrew 60,000 of his best troops, including the whole Imperial Guard, from the Peninsula, to take a part in the war in Russia. Wellington, feeling the pressure upon him thus relieved, revolved in his mind various plans for offensive operations. Among the rest, he entertained a design of making an attempt on Ciudad Rodrigo by escalade; but the rising of the waters in the rivers which required to be crossed rendered this design impracticable. So closely, however, was that fortress watched, that Don Julian Sanchez, a guerilla chief, who had thrown himself into it when it was besieged by Massena, and cut his way out when its surrender was approaching, made prisoner of the governor-general, Regnaud, by a well-devised ambuscade, when riding unguardedly outside the walls. He became a frequent and acceptable guest at Lord Wellington's table, who received him with the courteous hospitality with which Marmont had entertained Colonel Gordon, and which brave and chivalrous nations owe to each other.[1]

1 Lond. ii. 227-230.

58. Brilliant success of General Hill at Aroyo de los Molinos. Oct. 27.

But these projects ere long were succeeded by another which was conducted with the greatest ability by General Hill. When Marmont withdrew with the bulk of his army to the neighbourhood of Placencia, he left a corps of his army at Merida, which first moved to the neighbourhood of Zafra, but afterwards to that of Caceres, for the purpose of levying contributions. Deeming that

corps so far detached from support that it might be possibly surprised, Wellington ordered General Hill to take the field and move against it. These instructions that able officer executed with the most consummate ability. Selecting from his corps a small body of troops about 5000 strong, he set out on the 22d October from his cantonments, and advanced with every precaution against being discovered, and with such success, that on the evening of the 27th he arrived at Alcuesca, in the neighbourhood of Aroyo de los Molinos, where Girard lay utterly ignorant of the danger with which he was threatened. Hill forbade any fires to be lighted or drums beat; and though the secret of his approach was well known to the peasantry in the neighbourhood, yet they kept it with religious fidelity. The attacking columns set out at midnight, consisting of the 71st and 92d Highlanders, and 1st battalion 50th, under Colonel Howard, supported by the 28th, 34th, and 39th, under Colonel Wilson, a Portuguese regiment, and a brigade of cavalry, and reached Aroyo de los Molinos at daybreak wholly undiscovered. The 71st and 92d charged into the town with loud cheers, the bands leading and playing the well-known Jacobite air, "Heigh, Johnny Cope, are you waking yet?" Surprised in this manner, the French offered, as might have been expected, no very resolute resistance, and Hill having detached a part of his force to take them in flank after they were driven out of the town, they were compelled to take refuge in the adjoining mountains, where the Highlanders, at home among the rocks, pursued them, and made great numbers of prisoners. The result was, that out of 2000 infantry and 600 horse, of which the column consisted, not more than 600 escaped, including Girard, who was wounded. The whole guns and above one thousand men were made prisoners, with the loss only of seven officers and sixty-four men, including the Portuguese.[1]

[1] Hill's Desp. Oct. 30, 1811; Gurw. vii. 373, note; Lond. ii. 235-237.

But all these projects were subordinate to Wellington's

CHAP. VI.

1811.

main design, which was to attempt, in the depth of winter, the reduction of Ciudad Rodrigo by main force. Notwithstanding all the vigilance exerted in the distant blockade, supplies had been frequently thrown into that fortress; and it was evident that all hopes of reducing it were at an end, unless it could be done by a rapid siege before the distant armies of France could assemble for its relief. He was not without hopes of achieving this object, as the difficulty of procuring supplies had obliged Marmont to quarter his army at a considerable distance from the Portuguese frontier, and in situations far apart from each other: and the badness of the roads rendered the transport of carriages and artillery in winter a matter of great difficulty. To this was to be added another consideration of not less moment. Not only had the finest part of the army which had recently threatened the British at Fuente Guinaldo been recalled into France, but the Emperor had detached two strong divisions of infantry and one of cavalry, containing 15,000 combatants, from Marmont's army, to take part in Marshal Suchet's expedition against Valencia, and at the same time dislocated the whole army of the north, and of Portugal, by ordering the latter to Old Castile.[1]

59. Wellington approaches Ciudad Rodrigo.

[1] Marm. iv. 78-80.

Marshal Marmont set out in person in obedience to these orders on the 5th January 1812 for Old Castile, leaving only Brennier's division in the valley of the Tagus, to keep an eye on Estremadura, and General Clausel with the 2d division at Avila. An attentive observer of all that was passing, Wellington built upon this auspicious state of things his expectation, by a sudden movement, of gaining a great advantage over the enemy, and wresting from him the great frontier fortress of Spain, which was all that remained to him of the conquests of the army of Portugal. Directing General Hill, therefore, to advance upon Merida, as well to alarm Drouet and Soult as to draw off part of the enemy's force from Ballasteros in Andalusia,[1] he made himself ready to invest

60. Dislocation of the French armies in Spain. Jan. 1812.

[1] Lond. ii. 241; Marm. iv. 81.

Ciudad Rodrigo in form, now that it was left to its own resources.

1812.

61. Investment of Ciudad Rodrigo and its difficulties.

How great soever might be the advantages which Wellington enjoyed in the dispersion of the French troops, he had his full share of difficulties in preparing for the siege. The fortress to be attacked stood on the brink of a rapid river, surrounded by a vast plain without any defensible position, water, or even cover for the troops. It was impossible to place an army there for any considerable time without exposing it to hardships which must soon prove fatal to its health. The town is situated upon one of three eminences which stand upon the right bank of the Agueda, and rise abruptly from the plain, which is in a high state of cultivation. "This plain is bordered," says Sir Charles Stewart, "on the north and west by a range of rugged mountains, and on the south-east by a similar range still more rugged and impervious. The former of these ranges consists of cliffs and crags, separated from one another here and there by wide passes, through which several excellent roads conduct to Salamanca and into Castile; the latter can boast only of the Pass of Perales, a defile so precipitous as to be perfectly useless in a military point of view, because perfectly impassable. Both are at the distance of several miles from the walls, and hence both are equally unavailing for the purposes of a blockading force; whilst neither offers a position at all favourable or commodious to an army intended to cover the progress of a siege." The whole country is "deficient in springs and pools, and the only source from which water can be procured by the inhabitants is the Agueda." This circumstance alone imposed a very serious difficulty upon the besieging army, for the mass of the troops required to be established at a distance from the river, from whence water could only be brought at great difficulty and expense. In addition to this, should the siege be once seriously undertaken, it must either be brought to a successful issue, or, in the event of its being raised, the

CHAP. VI. 1812.

whole artillery and stores would be lost: for the nature of the country, and the badness of the roads, rendered any attempt to withdraw them in presence of a superior enemy hopeless; and the banks of the Agueda and Coa are not only extremely rugged and difficult, but these rivers are liable to sudden floods, which sweep away bridges and render fords impassable.[1]

[1] Lond. ii. 193-196.

62. Description of the fortress.

"Ciudad Rodrigo," says Colonel Jones, "is built on a rising ground, on the right bank of the Agueda, and has a double *enceinte* all round it. The interior wall is of an old construction, thirty-two feet high, and generally of bad masonry, without flanks, and with weak parapets and narrow ramparts. The exterior enclosure is a modern fausse-braie of a low profile, and is constructed so far down the slope of the hill as to afford but little cover to the interior wall; and from the same cause of the rapid descent of the hill, the fausse-braie itself is very imperfectly covered by its glacis. On the east and south sides there are ravelins to the fausse-braie; but in no part are there any countermines nor a covered way. Without the town, at the distance of 300 yards, are the suburbs, which are enclosed by a bad earthen retrenchment hastily thrown up by the Spaniards during the siege of 1810. The French, too, since they had been in possession of Ciudad Rodrigo, had made strong posts of three convents, one on either side of the suburbs, and one in the centre; and they had also converted into an infantry post the convent of Santa Cruz, situated just beyond the glacis on the north-western angle of the place. The works of the suburbs, though slight, were sufficient to resist a *coup-de-main*. The ground outside the place is dry and rocky, except on the northern side, where there are two hills called the lesser and larger Teson. The one, at 180 yards from the works, rises nearly to the level of the ramparts, and the other, at 600 yards' distance, considerably above them. The French had erected a redoubt upon the highest of these hills, which required to be

taken before any attack was made on that side. This redoubt was supported by two guns and a howitzer placed in battery on the top of the fortified convent of San Francisco, at the distance of 400 yards from it; and a large proportion of the artillery of the place, particularly mortars and howitzers placed behind the rampart of the fausse-braie, was in battery to fire upon the approach from the hill."[1]

[1] Jones's Sieges in the Peninsula, i. 82, 83.

63. Wellington resolves on an attack on the place.

After mature deliberation and close personal inspection, Wellington determined to hazard an attack upon the town, notwithstanding all the difficulties with which such a measure was attended. "If we don't succeed in taking the town," he wrote to Lord Liverpool on the 7th January, "we shall at least bring back upon ourselves all the force which has marched away; and I hope we may save Valencia, or, at all events, afford some time to the Galicians and Asturians to organise a resistance to the invasion with which they are threatened. If we take the place, we shall, I hope, make a fine campaign in spring." His preparations for this step in advance had been long, though in profound secrecy, going forward. He had, in the most unostentatious manner, repaired the ruined parts of Almeida, and laid up in that town the siege-train which, as already mentioned, he had brought by the Douro from Lisbon, with a trestle-bridge equipment, with a large number of gabions and fascines. He had caused several hundred light carriages to be constructed to convey these stores from Almeida to the Agueda. To prevent Soult from taking any part in the defence of the place, he had directed General Hill—who, since his successful exploit at Aroyo de los Molinos, had become the object of unbounded terror to the French—to move with 15,000 men from Portalegre by Merida to the southward, so as to threaten Andalusia; the siege of Tarifa was begun;[2] and the troops which had been concentrated on the 8th December were sent back to their cantonments on the 10th, and the report was spread abroad

[2] Wellington to Gen. Hill, Jan. 5, 1812; Gurw. viii. 512; Marmont, iv. 82; Brial. i. 422.

CHAP. VI.

1812.

that all offensive operations were, for the present at least, abandoned.

64. Storm of the greater Teson. Jan. 8.

Wellington collected his army on the 7th January, crossed the Agueda on the 8th, and instantly commenced the investment of the place. The approaches and siege operations were conducted with unheard-of rapidity. Ground was broken on the night of the day on which the investment took place; and as it was essential that the redoubt on the greater Teson should be carried, orders were given for an attack on it by escalade that very night. Not dreaming of an assault so soon, the scaling-ladders had not been issued thus early; but the soldiers, eager for the affray, immediately set about constructing them, and, with the sides of some cars which were broken up for the occasion, and a few ropes taken from the baggage waggons, the want was soon supplied. Three hundred men of the 52d and 95th, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Colborne (now Lord Seaton), were then ordered out for the assault; while two firing parties were sent forward to keep up a heavy discharge on the flanking works, for the purpose of drawing off the attention of the garrison. Under cover of this fusillade the stormers were to descend into the ditch, cut away the palisades, and mount with the aid of their rude ladders into the redoubt. The attack was made with such resolution that the troops would not wait till the palisades were cut away, but, springing over, rushed up the ladders with such rapidity that two officers and forty-seven men, with three guns, were captured, the remainder of the garrison being put to the sword.

[1] Lond. ii. 248, 249; Wellington to Lord Liverpool, Jan. 9, 1812; Gurw. viii. 519.

65. Rapid progress of the siege. Jan. 10.

Advantage was quickly taken of this success to forward the operations. Seven hundred men were immediately pushed up the hill, of whom three hundred formed a lodgment close to the redoubt, while four hundred kept up the communication with the rear. The enemy directed all their fire against the outwork which had been

lost; but the soldiers worked with such vigour that before sunrise they were entirely under cover. The first parallel was immediately laid out, and before sunrise on the 10th the workmen there too were completely sheltered. By the 13th, at noon, not only was the first parallel completed, but three batteries, capable of containing thirty-two heavy guns, were erected. The guns were all brought up, and the ammunition lodged in the magazines. Matters were in this state, and the troops were already beginning to talk of opening their fire, when information was received that Marmont, who it was thought had gone with the divisions towards Valencia, but who in reality was in person in the north near Valladolid, was returning in haste with four divisions to raise the siege. This information was erroneous; for, so far from having stopped the march of his divisions towards Valencia, Marmont did not even hear of the investment of the place until the 15th. Then, however, calculating that it could hold out for three weeks, he gave orders for his nearest divisions to concentrate on Salamanca; summoned Dorsenne to his aid with part of the army of the north; recalled Bonnet from the Asturias; ordered Foy's division, which Montbrun had left to cover his rear, to join him; and directed that general himself to return by forced marches from Valencia. These measures, he calculated, would produce 32,000 men on the Agueda to raise the siege, by the 27th inst., and 40,000 by the 1st February. But this information, though premature, led to the most important results. Fearful of the approach of a large army, which might compel him to raise the siege, Wellington, contrary to all the ordinary rules of scientific attack, ordered the batteries already constructed in the first parallel to be armed, and the gunners to fire alone upon the body of the place, without attempting to silence the enemy's flanking fire, or ruin his defences.[1] By adopting this unusual course, he hoped in a few days to breach the rampart, and by a rapid attack carry the place in a third

[1] Lond ii. 250, 251; Brial. i. 426, 42; Wellington to Lord Liverpool, Jan. 15, 1812; Gurw. viii. 525.

CHAP. VI.

of the time which would have been required by the ordinary and tedious process.

1812.

66. The rampart is breached from a distance.

These orders were faithfully executed. The fire, though kept up at the distance of six hundred yards, and from twenty-five pieces only, was so effectual that the rampart soon began to crumble, and at length came down. The fortified convent of Santa Cruz, which, as already mentioned, commanded the captured redoubt, had been surprised on

Jan. 13.

the night of the 13th, by detachments of the Guards, without the loss of a man, and proved of the utmost service in covering the progress of the sap, which was immediately commenced and brought forward to the first parallel. A sally by the besieged, directed against the advanced works, at the moment the guard of the trenches was being charged, at first met with some success, but was at length repulsed without having done much mischief. At the same time the arrangements for covering the siege were made with the utmost diligence; and, from the troops being more healthy than they were when assembled last autumn at Soito, they produced a much larger force. A considerable part of Hill's army crossed the Tagus at Villa-Velha, and drew near to the right, while the brigades in the rear were closed up so as to be able to concentrate at the shortest notice at any point where they might be required. In this way the Adjutant-General's returns showed that a force of 38,000 infantry and 2500 cavalry might in a few hours be assembled at any point which might be assailed—a force sufficient to cover the siege even against the united force of Marmont and Dorsenne.[1]

[1] Lond. 251-253; Brial. i. 425, 426.

67. Splendid appearance of the bombardment.

The appearance of the works and the town when the fire began from the breaching batteries is thus described by Sir Charles Stewart: "There had been mounted, during the earlier part of the morning of the 14th, twenty-five heavy 24-pounders in the batteries already constructed in the first parallel. With these a fire was directed to be opened, partly upon the point intended to

be breached, partly upon the convent of San Francisco, another fortified post which, from the left of the redoubt, enfiladed our projected communication between the first and second parallels. At four o'clock in the afternoon it began; and of a spectacle more strikingly magnificent it has rarely been the good fortune even of a British soldier to be a witness. The evening chanced to be remarkably beautiful and still. There was not a cloud in the sky, nor a breath of wind astir, when suddenly the roar of artillery broke in upon its calmness, and volumes of smoke rose slowly from our batteries. These, floating gently towards the town, soon enveloped the lower parts of the hill, and even the ramparts and bastions, in a dense veil; whilst the towers and summits, lifting their heads above the haze, showed like fairy buildings, or those unsubstantial castles which are sometimes seen in the clouds on a summer day. The flashes from our guns, answered as they promptly were from the artillery in the place, the roar of their thunder reverberating among the remote mountains of the Sierra de Francisca—these, with the rattle of the balls against the masonry, and the occasional crash as portions of the wall gave way, proved altogether a scene which, to be rightly understood, must be experienced. I confess that I have seldom been more powerfully, and yet singularly, affected than I was by this magnificent combination of sights and sounds; and the chances are that I shall never again enjoy another opportunity of experiencing similar sensations."[1] *

[1] Sir Chas. Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, Jan. 21, 1812, MS.; Lond. ii. 255-257.

68. A practicable breach is made.

The breaching batteries were at first mainly directed against that part of the rampart which had been brought down by the French in 1810, and which, from having been recently repaired, had not as yet acquired the solidity of the other parts of the works. The top of it soon crumbled and came down, but the middle and lower parts

* These and the succeeding eloquent passages are taken *verbatim* from Sir Charles Stewart's letters to Lord Castlereagh from the spot, from which his *Narrative of the Peninsular War* was afterwards compiled.

CHAP. VI. 1812.

were so effectually covered by the fausse-braie that little or no injury was experienced by it; and serious doubts began to be entertained by the engineers whether it would be possible to make a practicable breach till that covering had been blown in. Preparations, accordingly, were made for pushing the approaches nearer; and, preparatory to this, a heavy fire was directed on the San Francisco convent, which in a few hours was reduced to a heap of ruins, and, along with the adjoining suburb, taken possession of shortly after dusk by a party of the 40th. No sooner was the enemy dislodged from this fort than the approaches were pushed forward with the utmost vigour; and on the evening of the 17th, they were advanced to within a hundred and eighty yards of the rampart. From the new parallel so heavy a fire was kept up, both on the old breach and an old tower which was near it on our left, that the former was deemed practicable, while the latter fell with a tremendous crash, and opened a large aperture. Pits were then dug along the glacis, in which riflemen were placed, as was afterwards so much done at Sebastopol, with orders to keep up an active fire on the embrasures, while an incessant shower of grape and canister was thrown on the breaches, so as to render any repairing of them impossible. By mid-day of the 18th, the town was reconnoitred by Major Sturgeon of the engineers, who reported that the greater and lesser breaches were were both practicable. Wellington upon this directed the place to be summoned; and the governor having returned a gallant answer, declaring his resolution to hold out, he determined on an assault on the evening of the 19th, which he announced to the army in the laconic order, "Ciudad Rodrigo must be carried by assault this evening at seven o'clock."[1]

[1] Lond. ii. 258-263; Brial: i. 427; Marmont, iv. 84.

69. Plan of the assault.

The plan of attack, which was drawn up by Lord Wellington and his staff in the trenches, in the midst of a terrific cannonade, was as follows: The attack was to be made by the divisions which happened to be in the

trenches at the time, and as they were the light and third division, the honour devolved on them. The third division, consisting of the 45th, 74th, and 88th, forming M'Kinnon's brigade, on the one hand, and of the 5th 77th, 83d, and 94th, forming Campbell's brigade, on the other, were to attack the main breach. They were to be preceded by the light companies, under Major Manners, as a storming party; and they were to be headed by parties carrying woolpacks and scaling-ladders, to enable the soldiers to cross the ditch and mount the walls. These troops were regularly formed in the second parallel, General M'Kinnon leading, and Colonel Campbell in support, with a Portuguese brigade in reserve. To aid this main attack a feint was to be made on the right by Major O'Toole, with five companies of the 95th rifles, and the light companies of the 83d and 94th, the whole guided by Major Sturgeon. The smaller breach on the left was to be stormed by the light division, consisting of two battalions of the 52d, one of the 43d, two of the 95th, and two of Caçadores. This attack was to be led by Vandeleur's brigade, which, issuing from the left of the convent of San Francisco, was to advance first against the breach in the fausse-braie, and then upon that in the ramparts. As soon as they reached the summit of the fausse-braie, they were to detach to their right, in order to communicate with M'Kinnon's brigade, and flank the attack on the principal wall; and as soon as they had reached its summit, they were to turn to the right and join in the main assault. As soon as this was done they were to endeavour to burst open the Salamanca Gate, near which the rest of the division was placed, which was to rush in and secure the place. Three hundred volunteers, under Major Napier, were to head this assaulting column; and they were preceded by the bearers of bags and ladders, who were not to carry their arms. Positive orders were issued that not a shot was to be fired by the stormers during the assault.[1] To aid the main attack, others

[1] Wellington's orders, given in Lond. ii. 261, 262.

CHAP. VI. 1812.

were to be made by Pack's Portuguese brigade on the outwork of St Jago and the convent of La Caridad, and they were to be rendered real or feigned, as circumstances should direct.

70. Aspect of the trenches before the assault.

As these orders appeared in an early part of the day, ample time was given for both men and officers to be fully apprised of the duties they were severally expected to perform. "They were not inattentive," says Sir Charles Stewart, "to their instructions; and exactly at the moment specified, each column took its station in readiness to obey the signal of advance. It would be no easy matter to describe the state of a soldier's feelings during the pause which ensued. The evening was calm and tranquil, and the moon in her first quarter shed over the scene a feeble light, which, without disclosing the shape or form of particular objects, rendered their rude outline distinctly visible. There stood the fortress, a confused mass of masonry, with its breaches like shadows cast upon the wall, whilst not a gun was fired from it, and all within was as still and motionless as if it were already a ruin, or that its inhabitants were buried in sleep. On our side, again, the trenches, crowded with armed men, among whom not so much as a whisper might be heard, presented no unapt resemblance to a dark thunder-cloud, or to a volcano in that state of tremendous quiet which usually precedes its most violent eruptions. But the delay was not of long continuance; at a few minutes past seven o'clock the word was quietly passed that all things were ready, and the troops poured forward with the coolness and impetuosity of which British soldiers alone are capable, and which nothing could successfully oppose. No piece of clock-work, however nicely arranged, could obey the will of its maker more accurately than the different columns obeyed that night the wishes of their chief; and his orders were in consequence executed, at every point, with the same precision and regularity as if he had been manœuvring so many battalions upon a *revue plateau*."[1]

[1] Lond. ii. 263, 264; Sir Charles Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, Jan. 21, 1812, MS.

71. The assault of the place Jan. 19.

All these attacks in the end proved successful, but not until a desperate resistance had been encountered and overcome. M'Kinnon's brigade, amidst a heavy fire of grape and musketry, rushed swiftly over the glacis, leapt down the counterscarp, reached the foot of the great breach, and, in spite of the most resolute resistance, reached the summit. There they were joined by Ridge at the head of the second battalion of the 5th Regiment, and Lieutenant-Colonel Campbell with the 94th Regiment, who, having escaladed the fausse-braie farther to the right, had made their way along it. Both united, pressed fiercely on. The enemy, however, fell back from the main wall, behind a retrenchment, in front of which a ditch of considerable width had been dug, and as the assailants were attempting to pass it, a mine was suddenly sprung, by which the foremost and bravest, and among others the heroic M'Kinnon, who was in the very front, leading them on, were blown into the air and killed. Undaunted, however, by this terrible catastrophe, the survivors held their ground amidst the ruins, and were, soon after, joined by Major O'Toole's column, led by Major Sturgeon, from the right; but though the summit of the breach was held, the retrenchment could not be forced, and the foes there remained, exchanging fire without an advantage being gained on either side. In the mean time, however, decisive success was won in other quarters. The light division, under Craufurd, issued from the convent, Major Napier heading the storming party of the lesser breach, Lieutenant Gurwood* leading the forlorn hope, and Craufurd himself being with them, in the very front, alongside of General Vandeleur and Colonel Colborne of the 52d.† The whole of those brave officers were struck down, severely wounded, Craufurd, unfortunately, mortally so. The loss of those leaders caused the

* Since the distinguished Editor of the *Wellington Despatches*.

† Since Lord Seaton, and who, at the head of the 52d, did such good service in repelling the attack of the Old Guard at Waterloo.

CHAP. VI.

1812.

troops to pause for a few minutes; but then, with a shout which was heard over the whole lines, above the roar of musketry and cannon, they again sprang forward, and won the summits; part, turning to the right, took the defenders of the main breach in flank; while part, turning to the left along the ramparts, reached and forced open the Salamanca Gate. At the same time the cry of victory was heard in other quarters. M'Kinnon's and Campbell's men again rushed up the great breach, which at last, by their joint efforts, was forced; while the Portuguese under Pack, who had converted his false attack into a real one, escaladed the ramparts in their front. The enemy then submitted at all points; and, to the honour of the British soldiers be it said, no slaughter of the unresisting took place; for out of 1800 who were in arms when the assault began, no less than 1500 were made prisoners.[1]

[1] Wellington to Lord Liverpool, Jan. 20, 1812; Gurw. viii. 527, 528; Lond. ii. 264-266; Brial. i. 427, 428.

72. Fearful disorders after the place was taken.

But although the honour due to the troops engaged in the assault was not stained by blood unnecessarily shed on the occasion, it was tarnished by the other lamentable excesses which so often follow in a town taken by assault, and which in this instance were felt as peculiarly severe, from the circumstance that the inhabitants, on whom they chiefly fell, belonged to a friendly and allied power. The national vice of intoxication here broke out in a fearful manner, and led to the most revolting excesses. The firing, which had ceased when the breaches were carried, was soon renewed in various quarters, not regularly, as if the troops were engaged in street fighting, but by dropping shots, showing that the soldiers had spread through the town, and were firing off their pieces in triumph or drunkenness, or to extort plunder. With these were mingled the groans of the wounded, the shouts of the soldiers, and the screams of the women who had been seized in the tumult. Many houses burst into flames, while the spirit-cellars were emptied; and under a cloud of darkness rendered more terrible by the lurid light which

the conflagration cast around, for several hours every enormity save murder was committed. At length, however, the disorders abated, partly from the efforts of the officers of all ranks, who were indefatigable in their endeavours to arrest them, partly from the drunken dropping down asleep, and the removal of the wounded to the hospitals; and by dawn on the following day, order was restored to a degree which a few hours before could scarcely have been hoped for.[1]

[1] Lond. ii. 266, 267; Brial. i. 429.

73. Great results of this conquest.

Six officers and one hundred and forty men were killed in the Allied army, and sixty officers and five hundred men wounded, in this assault; the casualties during the siege were nine officers and two hundred and seventeen men killed, eighty-four officers and one thousand men wounded. But if the loss was severe the gain was great, and never in the face of a superior army was a greater blow struck by any nation. The immediate fruits of the victory were three hundred and twenty-one pieces of cannon, nearly the whole of which were serviceable, embracing the whole siege-train of the army of Portugal, and an immense quantity of ammunition and military stores of every description. But these results, important as they were, formed but a small part of the advantages gained by the success. The great thing was that it secured the most exposed frontier of Portugal, barred the great road to Lisbon, and rendered the British army available, without further guard of the north-east frontier, for other offensive operations elsewhere.

74. Both armies are placed in cantonments.

Such was the energy which the British general evinced in securing his conquest, that within two days after it had been achieved, Ciudad Rodrigo was put in a respectable state of defence, the breaches repaired, the trenches filled up, the lines effaced, and the place rendered capable of resting on its own resources. Marmont heard of the commencement of the siege on the 15th at Valladolid, where he had arrived on the 11th, and on the 21st he had collected 20,000 men, and got them on to

Jan. 21.

CHAP. VI. 1812.

Salamanca. He then received the unwelcome intelligence of the fall of the place, which struck him with unbounded astonishment, and excited, when he learned it, the utmost indignation in the breast of Napoleon. The thing, however, was done, and could not be undone; and as his army was not provided with anything requisite to undertake a winter campaign, Marmont halted his troops, and, sending them back to their cantonments, contented himself with leaving two divisions, and some horse, in the valley of the Tagus, to keep an eye on Badajos, which he partly deemed would be the next object of attack. Wellington, on his side, recrossed the Agueda with his whole army, replaced his troops in their cantonments, and again established headquarters at Frenada, within the Portuguese frontier.[1]

[1] Marmont, iv. 84, 85; Wellington to Lord Liverpool, Jan. 29, 1812; Gurw. viii. 591.

75. Return to Britain of Sir Charles Stewart, and death of Lady Stewart. Feb. 8.

The beginning of the year 1812 was the turning point in the life of Sir Charles Stewart. Hitherto, his services as Adjutant-General to the Peninsular troops, how important and well known soever to the officers of the army, had been shrouded, in a manner, from the general eye in the blaze of Wellington's glory. But now he was to be placed singly on a great theatre, and to exercise alone an important influence on the fortunes of Europe. This change, as so often occurs in human affairs, began with misfortune. The fatigues and anxiety consequent on the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo induced a return of the intermitting fever which he had taken on the banks of the Guadiana, and had compelled his temporary return to England in the spring of 1811; and he became so seriously ill that Lord Wellington, much against both their wishes, insisted on his return. He embarked for Britain, accordingly, in the beginning of February 1812; and he had hardly landed on its shores, when he learned the death of the beloved partner of his life, who breathed her last on the 8th February, after a short illness, leaving only one descendant, the present Marquess of Londonderry. This melancholy event made a material differ-

ence on his position, and in the end opened the way to a great and auspicious change in his fortunes; but, in the first instance, it was the cause of heartfelt grief to Sir Charles Stewart, for the deceased was a person endowed with every virtue, and who had inspired an attachment as strong as she felt towards her soldier husband. It was some consolation in this bereavement that he shortly after received the honour of a Knight Grand Cross of the Bath from his sovereign, in recognition of his eminent services as Adjutant-General of the army in the Peninsula, and was soon appointed to an important military and diplomatic situation at the court of Prussia, then in the most eventful crisis of its history, the duties of which gradually withdrew his mind from the memory of his domestic loss.

CHAP. VI. 1812. Feb. 26.

CHAPTER VII.

LORD CASTLEREAGH, FROM HIS RESIGNATION OF OFFICE IN SEPTEMBER 1809, TO THE OPENING OF THE GERMAN WAR IN MARCH 1813.

1809.

1. Important career of Lord Castlereagh when out of office in Parliament.

THE resignation by Lord Castlereagh of the situation of War Minister in September 1809, already recounted, in consequence of his duel with Mr Canning, and the discovery that the majority of the Cabinet had combined for his overthrow, of course led to the cessation of his official duties, but did not interrupt his public services. He remained, though without office, a member of the House of Commons, and that too during the most trying and momentous period of British history. As an ordinary legislator, he had still the means of following out his views and asserting his principles; and he was, perhaps, enabled to do this the more effectually from his time being no longer consumed or his attention distracted by a multitude of official cares. By discharging his duty as a member of the House of Commons, he was enabled to render the most important services to his country; and never was a time when they were more called for, for never had there been a period when the Opposition was more powerful, or were pledged to measures more certain to prove disastrous, if not fatal, in their consequences to the country. It was easy to see how this came about, even with the many able and clear-headed men who then led the Opposition in Parliament. It was party-spirit which did the whole. That important and often salutary element

in a free constitution, was then in a state of unprecedented activity, in consequence of the shipwreck of the Whig party, when apparently firmly seated in power, on the Catholic question, and it now had acquired a degree of violence which led to a vigorous assault on the whole policy of Government, both foreign and domestic, with scarcely any regard to the real merits of the questions at issue, but a desire only to make them a subject of contest, which might lead to the overthrow of the Ministry. Four questions stood pre-eminent in the parliamentary debates of that period, in all of which Lord Castlereagh took a leading part, and which present in a favourable light his oratorical powers. These were the Regency, the Peninsular War, the Orders in Council, and the Bullion Question.

2. Regency question.

The first of these questions, and not the least important in a constitutional point of view, was that of the Regency of the Prince of Wales. The venerable monarch who had so long swayed the sceptre of these islands, had been so seriously afflicted by the death of his favourite daughter, the Princess Amelia, in September 1810, that he had experienced a recurrence of the mental disorder which had plunged the nation into such consternation in 1788. The physicians having pronounced the disease, if not incurable, likely to be of long endurance, it became necessary to make a proper provision for the discharge of the royal functions during his incapacity. This was done by a bill brought forward by Ministers, which proposed to vest the office in the Prince of Wales while the malady of the sovereign continued. So far, all were agreed; but there was a great diversity of opinion as to the foundation on which the authority should be vested, and the restrictions with which it should be accompanied. Strange to say, the two parties took sides here diametrically the reverse of what might have been anticipated from their previous principles. The Whigs contended, as they had done in 1788, that the Prince was entitled to the office

CHAP. VII. 1810.

jure divino, in virtue of his right of succession to the throne, without any restrictions: the Tories maintained that the office should be conferred by the two Houses of Parliament, and under such restrictions as to them should seem meet. Great efforts were made by the Whigs to limit the restrictions; as they anticipated from the Prince of Wales, if unconstrained master of his own actions, an immediate summons to form an administration. To prevent such a change, Ministers exerted their whole strength in support of the restrictions. The debate took place on 31st December 1810, on certain resolutions proposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pledging the House to confer the office subject to certain restrictions. The Opposition contended that these limitations tended to cripple the royal power at a time when its full exercise was required, and that they implied an ungracious and unfounded distrust of the royal personage to whom it was proposed to tender the Regency. In answer to these objections, Lord Castlereagh said:—

3. Lord Castlereagh's speech in support of the restrictions.

"With respect to distrust of the Prince of Wales, I can with perfect truth declare, that such a feeling does not exist in my mind; on the contrary, my conviction is, that were the full regal authority intrusted to his Royal Highness, it would be exercised with the utmost forbearance and moderation on his part. Were I providing for an interest of my own, I would not hesitate a moment in acting on that conviction; but as a representative of the people, I do not feel myself at liberty to act on principles of personal confidence. I have a public duty to perform, which requires me to provide for a constitutional emergency on constitutional grounds. Under these impressions, I am bound to declare that the security we must look for is that of legal enactments, and that, in the discharge of a public trust, it is impossible for me to recognise any other as adequate. In like manner, and with equal sincerity, I disclaim any inference being drawn from my vote, that I impute dangerous views to the possible advisers

of the Prince during the short period that it is proposed to extend the restrictions. But it is not sufficient that such should be my trust and conviction at the present moment: I am bound to provide such securities as should render any abuse of the royal powers at any future time, under the precedent now established, impossible.

4. Continued.

" Regencies have been appointed at many different times in English history, and by many different authorities: sometimes by the preceding monarch, as in the case of the *Custodes Regni;* sometimes by the three branches of the Legislature, as has been done in the Regency Acts since the Revolution, when the three branches were entire; and by the Lords and Commons alone, when, as in the present instance, the third estate was in temporary abeyance. But in none of these cases was a regent ever appointed without restrictions. The restrictions varied, as might be expected, with the circumstances of the case and the temper of the times: sometimes, as in the minority of Richard II. and Henry VI., they consisted in the authority being invested in a council, in which the king's brothers were included, but with the title only of 'Protector.' In more modern times—viz., in the Act of Queen Anne, the 24th George II., and the 5th of his present Majesty—the Acts establishing an interim government were passed when the Legislature was entire, and pains were always taken that the kingly power should be exercised under some control. In the first case, a council was to govern in the king's absence without a regent at all; in the two latter, during the eventual minority of the infant king, the regent was to exercise the royal powers, but, as expressed in the face of these Acts, 'under the restrictions and limitations therein presented,' which were so stringent that, so far from leaving him the authority of king, they deprived him of the power of choosing his own ministers without the consent of a certain portion of his council.

" The restrictions proposed are to be imposed only for

CHAP. VII. 1810. 5. Continued.

a year, which will not materially weaken the royal powers; the interval is not so long as to deprive him of the influence derived from favours and expectation: and sure I am that the power of the Regent, under the restrictions imposed by law, would be greatly stronger than if left unfettered, when he might be called on to exercise a forbearance which might create jealousy and dissatisfaction on the part both of his ministers and his supporters. Upon these grounds, I am of opinion that full regal powers should not at once be conferred upon the Regent, and that the proposed mode of limiting his authority, by restricting the limitations to a single year, is preferable to the course formerly adopted of parcelling out the royal power among many councillors. The principle of restriction is justified, so far as it is confined to the protection of the reversionary interest of the King in his government, preserving at the same time to the Regent the most enlarged exercise of the powers of the crown which is consistent with this consideration. Upon these grounds I object to the fifth resolution, which separates the household of the King from the executive government, and vests the appointment of the former in the Queen. This separation does not appear to fall within the conservative principle I have mentioned. I deprecate a contest between the splendour of the crown and that of the Regent: I wish the latter to show himself as deriving everything from the monarch to whom everything is to revert the moment his Majesty is restored to health. I object to the appearance of the Regent being anything *per se*; it ought to be marked that he was an individual authorised to represent the King still upon the throne. It is open to Parliament to limit his powers or withhold them from him as they think fit; but whatever power or dignity the regent should assume, it ought to be the King's and not his own. On these grounds, I think the project of a separate household for the Regent objectionable, both on the ground

of economy and influence. But the transfer of such a branch of the influence of the crown to the Queen is still more objectionable, as tending to mix her Majesty unnecessarily with politics, and as carrying upon the face of it a dark influence which, if exercised adversely to the Regent's government, might seriously weaken it, while, if thrown in aid of a separate household of his own, it might prove a most dangerous and unconstitutional increase of the influence of the crown."[1] These views prevailed with the Legislature; and the bill, imposing restrictions on the Regent for a year, passed by a majority of only three in either House—the numbers in the Commons being 217 to 214, and in the Lords 105 to 102.[2]

[1] Parl. Deb. xviii. 522-527.

[2] Ibid. 672-747.

6. Ferment in the country against the Peninsular war.

It must be confessed that the Peninsular contest at this period presented a fair subject for parliamentary invective, and that, judging by the past, it promised little chance of success. The great preparations and brilliant prospects of the campaign of 1809 had terminated in nothing but disaster. Austria, defeated at Wagram, had concluded a humiliating peace, attended by the loss of a fourth of her dominions, and withdrawn altogether from the theatre of European warfare; the great expedition to Walcheren, which was to have brought back the Scheldt fleet as its trophy, had returned to the British shores sorely weakened by disease, without having accomplished anything worthy of its strength, and the expectations which had been formed of it; while Wellington, whose career had begun in so brilliant a manner on the Douro and at Talavera, had been driven to a calamitous retreat to the sands of Estremadura, where half the army was soon in hospital. There was enough here to augment the terrors of the timid, and arrest the attention of the most inconsiderate; and it did not require the eloquence of Lord Granville, Lord Grey, and Mr Whitbread, to get up a strong opposition in the country to any further prosecution of the Continental war. The vast strength of France, the unparalleled genius of its military chief, the insanity of making any

CHAP. VII. 1810.

attempt to contend with him on land, were in every mouth, and loudly re-echoed by a great majority of the press, ever disposed to inflame, rather than moderate, the passions of the moment; and to such a length did the general ferment go, that it was even taken up by the public bodies in the country, and the Common Council of London presented a petition to the King on the subject, which is one of the most curious instances of popular error on record in the whole annals of history. The Opposition, as well they might, made the most of this, to them, auspicious state of things; the powerful eloquence of Mr Canning, in consequence of his absence from England after his duel with Lord Castlereagh, was no longer at hand to support the Government; and it required all the firmness of the latter to make head against the torrent, and prevent the Peninsular contest being at once abandoned, during the first moments of despair consequent on the retreat from Talavera. Lord Castlereagh acted a noble and truly patriotic part on this occasion. Though out of office, and having been undermined in the Cabinet by a secret and unworthy intrigue, he did not attempt to avenge his wrongs upon his former colleagues; he did not join the ranks of Opposition, or change his public conduct to gratify private feelings. He gave Government a generous and effective aid, and, supported by Wellington in the field, maintained the contest against the surging multitude at home and abroad, who were striving to bring it to a termination.

7. Lord Castlereagh's speech on the Spanish War of 1809.

The debate came on on February 1, 1810, on occasion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer moving a vote of thanks to Lord Wellington and the army which fought at Talavera. General Tarleton had then opposed the vote, and even condemned in no measured terms the conduct of Lord Wellington on this occasion. Upon this Lord Castlereagh rose and said,—"The gallant general has felt himself called on, in the discharge of a public duty, not only to refuse a vote of thanks to Lord Wellington, but

even to lend his countenance to the attempt to convert a vote of thanks into the heaviest censure which could be passed on a most meritorious officer. I must protest, in the outset, against the practice of referring to the whole operations of a campaign on a question confined to the merits of a single but glorious and memorable action. But while I protest against such a principle, I feel I should be doing great injustice to Lord Wellington if I declined to enter on the merits of the campaign as a whole, which were such as to confer the highest lustre on that noble officer. In April 1809 Lord Wellington found himself at the head of 25,000 men in Portugal. His instructions directed him to rescue and defend that country, but with liberty to combine and co-operate in the execution of a plan for joint operations with any of the Spanish armies on the frontier, looking, however, to the defence of Portugal as the grand object of the expedition, and the most important duty he had to perform. Soult at that period occupied the northern provinces of Portugal, while Victor, after having beaten Cuesta at Medellin, menaced the south of that kingdom. The wish to drive the enemy out of Portugal attracted his attention to the North; the entreaties of Cuesta were for combined operations against Victor: and his anxiety to carry into full effect the spirit of his instructions rendered the option difficult. He decided for the North, in the first instance, leaving General Mackenzie, with 12,000 men, to watch Victor on the Abrantes frontier. It is unnecessary to dwell on the brilliant manner in which the exploit of crossing the Douro, and expelling the French from Portugal, was performed, because, however it might be cavilled at by some in this country, ample justice has been rendered to it by the general voice of Europe, and even that of his enemy.

8. Continued.

"The principle upon which Lord Wellington acted, and was instructed to act, in the campaign, was, in the first instance, to provide for the defence of Portugal by the expulsion of the French from that country, and, having

CHAP. VII. 1810.

done that, to co-operate with Cuesta in Spain, so far as could be done without endangering the defence of Portugal. In marching on Talavera he expected to be able to give Victor such a shock that he could not easily recover from it, and prevent him co-operating in any future attack on the north of Portugal. Before leaving Abrantes he had received intelligence of the battle of Aspern, and this necessarily opened still more extensive views, by proving that Napoleon, hard pressed in Germany, was in no condition to send reinforcements to Spain, and that now, if ever, Spain might be expected to make an effort for the recovery of her liberties, and might do so with every prospect of success. He advanced accordingly to Talavera; and the victory which he had there gained secured to Spain the line of the Tagus, compelled the enemy to evacuate Galicia and Asturias, and enabled our Allies to rescue from his grasp the fleet at Ferrol, which was now safely moored at Cadiz. Had Lord Wellington not been prevented by Cuesta's infatuation from attacking Victor on the 23d July, there is every reason to believe that the Allied army would have gained a glorious victory, and effectually prevented that junction of Soult and Ney with Victor which afterwards took place, and rendered a retreat necessary to the Portuguese frontier. Lord Wellington, therefore, in advancing to Talavera, so far from proceeding rashly, or without due information, acted precisely on an accurate knowledge and judicious view of the state of affairs, and did the greatest possible service to the common cause, by drawing the whole French disposable force upon himself in the heart of Spain, and thus gaining time for the formation and disciplining of fresh armies in its circumference.

9. Continued.

"The battle of Talavera itself was not merely a sterile triumph, unattended by any result, as is said by the gentlemen opposite. On the contrary, it was attended by the most important and beneficial consequences. It compelled the concentration of the corps of Soult, Ney, and

Mortier in the north-west of Spain, who advanced to Placencia with 34,000 men to threaten Lord Wellington's rear, of which the remnant of Soult's corps, which had advanced to Oporto, formed only 4000. The remainder was composed of Ney's corps, drawn from the Asturias, and Mortier's, from the neighbourhood of Burgos, all of which districts were entirely stripped of troops from the effect of Lord Wellington's advance. Had the Spaniards done their duty, this united force could not have been brought to bear upon the British army. Its advance had been foreseen and guarded against by Lord Wellington. His army could only be reached by an enemy approaching from the north-west, either by the Puerto Pico or the Puerto de Banos. Marshal Beresford, with 13,000, was stationed at the former, and the Spaniards undertook to hold the latter; but, unfortunately, instead of doing so, they abandoned it, and thus let in the united forces of Soult, Ney, and Mortier, into the theatre of operations on the Tagus. But though this unfortunate circumstance rendered the retreat to Estremadura necessary, yet still the advance to Talavera had been attended with two great and durable results. It had stayed the invasion of the south, and liberated all the north of Spain from the enemy. The French were now confined to the centre of Spain, where the resources of the country were nearly exhausted, and they would find it impossible to carry on the system of making war maintain war, which they had hitherto so successfully pursued.

10. Continued.

"A battle more glorious or distinguished than that of Talavera itself, was not to be found in the annals, not merely of England, but of modern Europe. Unlike many other actions which are gained by a lucky accident or fault on the part of the enemy, it was a fairly fought field, in which the prize was at length won by persevering firmness and indomitable courage against vastly superior numbers. By the same unfortunate fatality, however, which had attended all the operations of the Spanish

CHAP. VII. 1810.

armies, this glorious victory thus hard won could not be adequately improved. The attack was commenced by the French, at one o'clock in the afternoon of the 27th July; and it was in the twilight of that day that the exploit in the recovery of his former position was performed by General Hill, which must be still fresh in every recollection. Night intervened, and the two armies remained in their respective positions in sight of each other, awaiting the return of daylight to renew the conflict. It was during this awful interval that the distinguished general at the head of the British army enjoyed some repose, and found it in a manner which none but a really great man could enjoy during the intermission of an obstinate and sanguinary battle. From this repose Lord Wellington arose on the morning of the 28th to a renewal of the engagement, and a further display of his own ability and the intrepidity of his gallant army. The contest was then continued till twelve o'clock, when an interval of two hours' rest from the work of destruction was employed by the troops on both sides in removing their respective dead from the scene of action; and then it was that those hands, which before were uplifted for mutual destruction, met at one stream which intervened between their respective positions, and were shaken in token of their reciprocal admiration of the bravery, skill, and firmness displayed on both sides. I congratulate the country upon the restoration of that generous feeling and high spirit which has heretofore characterised the conduct of soldiers in civilised warfare. I congratulate the world upon the circumstance, that in these days the rage of war has not subdued the generous feelings which are the ornament of human nature, and that if some of our troops fall into the hands of the enemy they fall into the hands of foes who know how to respect them. To say that such an effort of bravery and skill, such an acquisition to British glory, is not calculated to call forth

the admiration of the House, is to attempt to introduce a feeling which I trust will never find a place in the British House of Commons.

"The loss on that day has been much dwelt on, and none can lament the brave men who perished on that occasion more sincerely than I do. But, sharing as I do to the very utmost that feeling, I must at the same time deprecate that careful searching into the details of loss, which is calculated to unnerve the military energy of the country. If such feelings become general, how shall we be able to resist the French or maintain the national independence, hitherto upheld by the strenuous efforts of our soldiers! But in truth, the loss, heavy as it is, has been greatly exaggerated. The returns, which I shall move for on a future day, will demonstrate this. In the mean time, I may observe that our whole loss in Portugal and Spain during the campaign, including the 1500 wounded who fell into the enemy's hands at Talavera, fell short of 8000 men. Of these 5000 were the killed and wounded at the battle there; while the loss of the French in that battle alone did not amount to less than 10,000 men. Soult, notwithstanding all the eulogiums on his military conduct pronounced by the gentlemen opposite, did not carry off a single piece of cannon, and but a third of his army, from the north of Portugal. The gallant chief who commanded the army has indeed fought for his title at Talavera; but he fought for it also in Asia and Europe, in all of which quarters he had been victorious. While all must lament the loss with which his last and crowning victory has been attended, let it be remembered what advantages that loss has produced. Compare the estimation in which the British army is now held, and the character it has won, with what they were when the Peninsular war began, and the mighty step in national renown which has been made will be at once apparent. We now appeared in the eyes of Europe, not merely, as heretofore, as a great naval, but

11. Concluded.

CHAP. VII. 1810.

a great military power; we were recognised as such by the enemy, who had at last experienced our might in our victories, and those often when, with inferior numbers, we defeated the best and most experienced of his troops." In reply, Mr Whitbread "congratulated the noble Lord who had just spoken on the display of eloquence which he had made, and Lord Wellington on the able panegyrist whom he had found, which, if not contradicted by the despatches themselves, might have amounted to a defence of his whole conduct while in office."[1]

[1] Parl. Deb. xv. 289-295.

12. Growing despondence on the Peninsular war in the country.

No division took place in the House of Commons on this debate, and the vote of thanks to Lord Wellington and the officers and soldiers under his command passed *nem. con.* But in the House of Lords a division took place on the general question of the conduct of the war, and the Ministers were supported by a majority of 32, the numbers being 65 to 33. So considerable a minority in a house constituted as the House of Peers at that time was, indicated a serious and growing feeling of despondence in the public mind, as to ultimate success in the Peninsular war, which immensely augmented the difficulty of carrying it on. Ministers were never sure of a majority in the House of Commons on the subject; and even the most sanguine among them had serious misgivings as to the expedience of continuing a contest which absorbed nearly the whole disposable military force of the country, was attended with enormous expense, the issue of which was extremely doubtful, and in which, if defeat was sustained, irreparable ruin to the national independence might be apprehended. It seemed hardly possible to expect that Lord Wellington, with an army not exceeding 60,000 effective men, of whom one-half were Portuguese, could by possibility maintain his ground in the Peninsula against a military power which had forces ten times as numerous at its disposal, and before which the great military monarchies of Austria and Russia had sunk. It is now known from the publication of the

Duke of Wellington's despatches, that these apprehensions were largely shared by the Government, and that, though they did not resolve on abandoning Portugal and withdrawing altogether from the contest, they threw upon him the responsibility of continuing it. Nor is it surprising that they did so. Judging from the past and the lessons of experience, there were no solid grounds for the belief that the struggle in the Peninsula could come to any other termination but that which had already attended similar efforts in Flanders, and under Sir John Moore in the north of Spain. Before we blame them for hesitating sorely on this point, we are bound to look, not merely to the result, but to the grounds which then existed for anticipating a different result from what in similar circumstances had too often before taken place.

13. Grounds of Lord Castlereagh and Wellington's confidence in the war in the Peninsula.

The grounds on which Lord Castlereagh and Lord Wellington believed the contrary, and on the strength of which the one maintained the contest in the field, and the other in the senate at home, were those contained in the memorable minute of 7th March 1809, on which the subsequent conviction and conduct of both had been founded. Lord Castlereagh, whose official position for several years at the head of the War Office had made him thoroughly acquainted with the military strength and resources of the country and of its enemy, was too well informed not to know that it was in vain for Great Britain, with its limited population, and vast colonies to defend, to think of coping alone with France on the continent of Europe. But he was not the less resolute to maintain the contest. He was well acquainted with the strength of the positions for defence which the mountain ridges of Portugal afforded, and the extreme difficulty of finding supplies for a large army in the interior of the Peninsula, for any length of time, from the resources of the country itself. He had authorised, as War Minister, the erection of the stupendous field-works at Torres Vedras, which afterwards proved an impassable barrier to French ambition. From these cir-

CHAP. VII. 1810.

cumstances he was led to expect that, if not permanently maintained, the war might at least be prolonged for a considerable time in Portugal. Much was to be anticipated from *simply gaining time* in the conflict. He was well aware of the oppressive manner in which the Continent, and Germany in particular, had been treated by the French ruler, and the immensity of the exactions, both in money and supplies, which had for years been extorted from its suffering inhabitants; and he entertained a sanguine hope that this arbitrary and ruinous system would in the end work out its natural result, and produce a general insurrection of the Continent against French domination. Everything depended on prolonging the contest in the Peninsula till this auspicious change took place; and the very desolation and ruin of the country, by rendering supplies difficult, if not impossible, for a large army, afforded the fairest prospect of being able to do so with ultimate success. Great Britain, resting on the sea as its base of operations, could experience none of the difficulty in obtaining supplies which might be anticipated for the French. Even in the most unfavourable point of view, and supposing Lord Wellington to be ultimately driven from Portugal, it would be no small matter to avert such a calamity for any considerable time, and postpone, if we could not entirely prevent, the imminent danger to the independence of Great Britain which would necessarily arise from the whole navy of Spain again falling under the power of France, and Napoleon acquiring the vast naval resources which that country derived from the immense trade which it carried on with its transatlantic possessions.*

* In the course of the debate on Lord Palmerston's motion respecting the army estimates, on March 4, 1811, Lord Castlereagh gave the following details on the measures he had adopted for the increase of the army during the time he had held the seals of the War Office: "It having fallen to my lot," said he, "officially to propose all the onerous measures which have been adopted since the year 1805 for levying men, it is gratifying to find that these efforts have achieved the great object to which they were progressively directed; that the zeal and perseverance of the nation, in cheerfully submitting to these burdens,

The difficulty of carrying on the war in the Peninsula, and the embarrassment of Government in conducting it, was immensely augmented by another circumstance. This was the combined effect of the British system of paying for everything they required, while the French paid for nothing, and the enormous and ruinous cost at which *specie*, which alone would pass on the Continent, had to be bought by the British Government. Such was the effect of the drain of gold and silver to the Continent, that the whole specie in Great Britain was bought up and sent there, where it could be sold at a great profit. So large and overpowering was this demand, that a guinea in London was selling for twenty-eight or thirty shillings, and even at more extravagant prices. It was with the utmost difficulty that specie could be got at all in the British Islands, and never in anything like sufficient quantities to meet the wants of the army abroad. The letters of Wellington, accordingly, to Government at this period are full of the most energetic complaints of the want of specie, and the absolute impossibility of maintaining the contest if it was not sent out in larger quantities than all the efforts of the British Government had hitherto rendered practicable. Nevertheless, the expenditure in the Peninsula had gone on rapidly increasing, until, in the close of 1810, it had reached the enormous amount of £420,000 *a-month*, or £5,040,000 a-year. This vast expenditure excited, as well it might, the most serious apprehensions in Ministers. Their private letters to Wellington were in the most desponding tone.[1]

14. Immense difficulty of getting specie for the British army.

[1] Gurw. vi. 37, 116, 168.

This state of matters was so unprecedented and alarm-

has been rewarded by the powerful army which it now possesses, unexampled in any former period of our history, and which has now left to Parliament only the easier task of upholding what by past labours had been created. What has been stated as to the present state of the army by the noble Lord (Palmerston) is the best proof of this. It consists of 211,000 regulars, 24,000 artillery, and 80,000 militia, in all respects in as efficient a state as the line. Compare this with its state in 1805—viz., regulars, 155,000; militia, 90,000; artillery, 14,000 —thus showing an increase, after supplying all the waste of war, of 56,000 regulars, and a decrease of 10,000 militia."—*Parliamentary Debates*, xix. 215.

CHAP. VII.

1810.

15. Appointment of the Bullion Committee.

ing that it awakened the most gloomy presentiments in the minds of the Cabinet; and so doubtful were they of the result, that they were often on the point of abandoning the Peninsula, and ordering Wellington, with his whole army, home. In order to allay the public apprehension, and get to the bottom, if possible, of this mysterious affair, then very little understood, and even now, after half a century's additional experience, not nearly so generally appreciated as its vital importance deserves, Government consented to the appointment of a select committee to inquire into the subject, take evidence, and report. The committee was chosen with the utmost impartiality, and comprehended the leading men on both sides of the House; in particular Mr Horner, Mr Ricardo, Mr Tierney, Mr Ponsonby, Mr Canning, Mr Vansittart, Lord Castlereagh, Mr Lushington, and many others. They examined the Governor and Deputy-Governor of the Bank of England, and all the leading bankers and merchants in London, as to the facts of the case, and their opinion on the causes to which the present anomalous and alarming condition of the currency was owing. Mr Horner was the chairman, who drew up the report, which was a very able and closely argued pleading on the side of the majority. They spared no pains in the obtaining and sifting of evidence; and much was expected from the verdict of a body composed of men of such distinction, and whose judgment was based on so extensive and valuable a mass of evidence. Yet, strange to say, the committee thus constituted and enlightened, concluded with a report not only directly contrary to the most elementary principles of political economy, but recommending measures which, if carried into execution, would beyond all doubt have, at the most critical period of the contest, at once destroyed the power of Great Britain, and terminated the struggle in favour of France. Lord Castlereagh was in the minority, and strongly combated the resolutions; and never did he render a more decisive service to his country than by successfully resisting their adoption by Parliament.[1]

June 8, 1810.

[1] Parl. Deb. xvii. ccii. 1, 4, lxxxiii. Appendix.

The committee began by stating what was undoubtedly true, that during the whole of 1809 and the months which had elapsed of 1810, the price of gold had been £4, 9s. to £4, 12s. per ounce, instead of the standard Mint price of £3, 17s. 10½d., which corresponded to a guinea being worth 25s. or 26s. During the same period the exchanges with Hamburg and Amsterdam were depressed as low as from 16 to 20 per cent below par, and that on Paris still lower. "So extraordinary a rise," they added, "in the market price of gold in this country, coupled with so remarkable a depression of the exchanges with the Continent, very early, in the judgment of the committee, pointed to something in the *domestic currency* as the cause of both appearances. It will be found from the evidence that the high price of gold is ascribed by most of the witnesses entirely to an alleged scarcity of that article, arising out of the unusual demand for it on the Continent of Europe. This unusual demand for gold upon the Continent is described by some of them as being chiefly for the use of the French armies, though increased also by that state of alarm and failure of confidence which leads to the practice of hoarding. Your committee think that in the sound and natural state of the British currency, the foundation of which is gold, an increased demand for gold from other parts of the world, however great, and from whatever cause arising, can have no effect in producing here, for a considerable period of time, a material rise in the market price of gold. But before they proceed to explain the ground of that general opinion, they wish to state some other reasons which alone would have led them to doubt whether, in point of fact, such a demand for gold as is alleged has operated in the manner supposed. Mr Whitmore, indeed, the Governor of the Bank of England, stated that, in his opinion, it was the high price of gold abroad which had carried our gold coin out of the country, but he did not offer to your committee any proof of the high prices. The committee are of

CHAP. VII. 1810.

opinion that there is at present an excess in the paper circulation of this country, of which the most unequivocal symptom is the very high price of bullion, and next to that the low state of the foreign exchanges, and that this excess is to be ascribed to the want of a sufficient check and control in the issue of paper from the Bank of England, and originally to the suspension of cash payments, which removed the natural and true control. No safe, certain, and constantly adequate provision against an excess of paper currency, either occasional or permanent, can be found but in the convertibility of all such paper into specie. Your committee, however, are of opinion that the suspension of cash payments cannot be safely removed at an earlier period than two years from this date (June 10, 1810); but that an early provision should be made by Parliament for terminating, by the end of that period, the operation of the several statutes which have imposed and continued that restriction."[1]

[1] Parl. Deb. xvii. Appendix, 203-262.

17. Mr Vansittart's counter-resolutions.

Such were the views of a majority of the committee, including Mr Horner, who was its chairman, and drew up the report, Mr Huskisson, Mr Lushington, Mr Tierney, Mr Ponsonby, and the whole Whig party. Mr Canning also concurred in the report, with the exception of that part of it which recommended the termination of the bank restriction within two years, which he thought should be deferred till the termination of the war. On the other hand, Mr Vansittart proposed certain resolutions in the committee, which, although rejected by the committee, were afterwards brought forward in the House of Commons, and came on for debate in May 1811. In that debate Lord Castlereagh took a very prominent part in support of Mr Vansittart's resolutions, and as they form the ground-work on which his argument was rested, the material part of them will be found in the note below.*

* The resolutions of Mr Vansittart were as follows:—

I. That the unfavourable state of the exchanges, and the high price of bullion, do not appear, in any of the instances referred to, to have been produced

18. Lord Castlereagh's argument against the Bullion Report.

Lord Castlereagh said: "It is essential to the best interests of the empire that this question should not only be decided speedily, but that it should be decided upon considerations so ample in all their bearings, that the judgment of the House may finally take the public mind along with it. For nothing can be so fatally injurious as to have a question of this sort kept in suspense in a country

by restrictions upon cash payments by the Bank of England, or by any excess in the issue of bank-notes; inasmuch as all these instances, except the last, occurred previous to any restriction on cash payments, and because the price of bullion has frequently been highest, and the exchanges most unfavourable, when the issues of bank-notes were the least.

II. That during seventy-eight years, ending with 1st January 1796, and previous to the restriction, the price of standard gold was under the Mint price twenty-eight years, and above the Mint price forty-nine years. In the three last years of the American war, the price of gold was £4, 2s. 6d. per ounce, although the bank-notes in circulation were reduced during the same period from £9,160,000 to £5,995,000.

III. That, in consequence of the extraordinary violence and rigour with which the war against this country has been conducted by the French Government, the ordinary trade of this country has been greatly deranged, and an export of the precious metals, which alone would be taken on the Continent in exchange, substituted for the export of our manufactures. That in addition to this, the naval and military expenditure of the United Kingdom in foreign parts has been very great during the last three years, especially in Spain; and that the price of grain has been higher, and the importation larger, during that time than at any period since the scarcity of 1801.

IV. That the amount of currency necessary for carrying on the transactions of the country must bear a proportion to its trade, income, and expenditure; and that the average value of the exports and imports, income and expenditure, and bank-notes of Great Britain, for three years before 1797, stood thus:—

Imports and exports, average of three years,	£48,752,000
Revenue, including loans,	37,169,000
Expenditure,	42,855,000
Bank-notes,	10,782,000
Coined in reign of George III.,	57,274,617

V. That the same averages on three years ending 5th January 1811 stood thus:—

Exports and imports,	£77,971,000
Revenue,	62,763,000
Loans,	12,673,000
Expenditure,	82,205,000
Bank-notes in circulation,	19,549,000
Gold coin very much diminished.	

VI. That the situation of the kingdom, in respect to its political and commercial relations with foreign countries, is sufficient, without any changes in the internal value of its currency, to account for the unfavourable state of the exchanges and the high price of bullion.

VII. That although it is important that the restriction on payments in cash

CHAP. VII. 1811.

whose power in war and prosperity in peace mainly depend upon its public and private gold. It must be conceded that the non-convertibility of the bank-note into cash upon demand is an abandonment for the time of the standard coin as the medium of our payment, although bank-notes were not at first a legal tender. They were merely declared inconvertible. True, the gold coin did not for long disappear; the Government merely left bank-notes to work their own way in circulation, and the experience of fourteen years has not furnished a single instance of payment in coin being insisted on when notes were tendered. Guineas were circulated in considerable numbers at par with bank-notes; and if they have latterly in a great measure disappeared or risen greatly in price, the cause is to be found in the extraordinary crisis of our commerce with the Continent, together with the magnitude of our military expenditure abroad, giving a new and excessive value to the precious metals, of universal circulation, as compared to bank-notes, which of course would pass only in this country.

19. Continued.

"It is obvious that the law, which declares the standard coin the only legal tender on the part of the Bank of England in discharge of their notes, proceeded upon the supposition of a natural state of things. It never could have been intended, under extraordinary circumstances, to enforce impossibilities; and the rights of persons under that law must be considered as circumscribed, as everything else is, by the limits of possibility. It cannot be the right of a portion of the community, by being the first to press forward for payment, to obtain a benefit which cannot be partaken of by others similarly entitled, but more distant. A modification of the right becomes,

should be removed as soon as the political and commercial relations of the country shall render it compatible with the public interest, it would be highly inexpedient and dangerous to fix a definite period for the removal of the restriction on cash payments prior to the time already fixed by 44 George III. cap. 1, or six months after a general peace.—*Parliamentary Debates*, xix. 70-74.

therefore, necessary for the purposes of justice, and for the interests of the whole. The power of applying that modification must rest with the Legislature, and the only question which can arise is, whether, at the moment the thing was done, an adequate necessity existed for a temporary suspension of the money system of the country. If so, Parliament is competent in this, as in all other instances, to provide for the public interest. Parliament did so provide in 1797; the necessity was of a description which admitted of no alternative; and it is of the very essence of the contract on which a circulation such as ours rests, that it should be subject to such a modification. I admit that, like the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act, or the proclamation of martial law, it is a surrender for a time of the sound and legitimate regulations of our ordinary system; the object being, by such temporary surrender, to preserve the system itself from ultimate destruction.

20. Continued.

"When I speak of our circulation in a sound state, I mean a circulation composed of bank paper and coin in such proportions as will enable any man at pleasure to convert his notes into coin. I do not consider a circulation purely metallic or purely of notes, as of this description. The former is only the device of barbarous ages, and wholly incompatible with the wants of a commercial country such as this; and the latter is defective, because, however well administered, when not convertible into coin, it leads, from ignorance, misstatment, and public alarm, to distrust and discredit. I admit a mixed circulation, such as existed before the Bank Suspension Act, is the only sound and natural state of our currency. Yet the committee must perceive that even in that, its most perfect state, it must depend on the habits of the country and the state of foreign markets, in what proportions the coin will remain in the country, or what danger may attend its abstraction. If coin is little in demand—if debts are usually discharged in paper, except for the smaller

CHAP. VII. 1811.

payments—if guineas are little sought after, unless when the credit of any particular paper is suspected, and even then the holders of it are more desirous of exchanging it for paper of undoubted security than for gold—it is plain the quantity of coin circulating within the country will be proportionally small. The various banking establishments will frame the scale of their cash balances upon the accustomed demand for guineas; less coin will exist in the hands of private individuals: and although the Bank of England may, upon principles of provident caution, not allow their stock of guineas to be diminished, yet the collective coin of the whole system will be less; and in the same proportion will it be exposed to be affected either by those causes which may suddenly revive an internal demand for coin, or by those external influences which, by drawing away the precious metals first in the shape of bullion and next of coin illicitly exported, must have a tendency to create distrust in a system when the coin is not in such abundance as to bear any very considerable reduction. That such may be our situation, if the country flourishes and credit improves, may be inferred from observing the distinct character which the habits of the people in different parts of the island have given to the country before the Bank Restriction Act passed, and the marked preference shown to bank-notes over coin in Scotland. Indeed, it is not a little remarkable that during the last twenty years, there has not been a single instance of a bank in Scotland proving ultimately insolvent. The Ayr Bank indeed failed; but its creditors were, in the end, all paid in full.

21. Continued.

"I regard the present measure, nevertheless, as only an exceptional measure intended to meet an exceptional case. Hitherto, the effects of the measure have been such as in every respect to justify its adoption. In all former wars, the country invariably declined in its commerce, in its revenue, and even in its industry, as the war continued. In this war, on the other hand, while

our exertions both by land and sea have been beyond all precedent great, the country has risen in manufactures, internal improvement, revenue, and commerce, with a velocity which has never before been experienced in a period of profound peace. In the American war, a termination would with certainty have been predicted from the decline of our resources during its continuance; in this war we feel that our resources are augmenting, and that there is no necessary limit to our exertions in point of time, so long as the injustice of the enemy shall leave us no other rational choice but perseverance in the contest. What is this difference so remarkable, so important, owing to? Principally to the Bank having been enabled to do its duty by the country without trembling, as it must otherwise have done, for its own safety. Instead of ruinously, so far as the public interests are concerned, contracting its issues at every moment of temporary pressure or alarm to prevent itself from being drained of its gold, it has been enabled on every emergency to support public credit with a steady hand. And thus the productive labour of the country, its true and real wealth, has not only been kept up, but enabled to extend itself; whereby the taxes, how heavy soever, have been paid with facility, the loans raised on moderate terms, and the whole machine provided without betraying a symptom of decline.

22. Continued.

"Let us consider what is the exceptional case which this confessedly exceptional measure was intended to meet. The ruler of France has determined, at the hazard even of inflicting commercial ruin upon those over whom he rules, to exclude your trade from the Continent. He absolutely shuts every harbour against your goods. Admitting that he has not been able to do this altogether, and that some do still find their way in, still, by excluding our manufactures to a great extent, he necessarily, in a most serious degree, turns the balance of trade against us. Failing our manufactures taken in exchange, our importa-

CHAP. VII. 1811.

tions from the Continent must all be paid in gold. Hence an obvious cause of an unfavourable state of the exchanges. In ordinary times, the immediate effect of such an unfavourable exchange would be a reduction of the price to the foreign consumer, resulting from the advantage of the exchange to him tending to force out a greater proportion of our manufactures; the quantity of bills would thereby be augmented, and the precious metals would, to a comparatively small amount, be sent abroad. So long as goods could be got to settle the account, the price of bullion would not rise materially above its natural price. But now, goods cannot be sent as in ordinary times. It is not price, as is usually the case, which limits the quantity of our exports: it is the risk and difficulty of introducing them to the Continent, where they sell at an advance of more than 100 per cent. What must be the result? Either that our exports must be reduced, or the precious metals be sent out as the kind of export which most readily finds its way to the Continent. Is it not obvious that this must drain the country of its bullion and coin? Is it difficult to understand why the price of bullion rises without referring it to a fall in the value of bank-notes? And if the rise becomes such as the exchange now indicates, is it not certain that the gold coin will be melted down and exported?

23. Continued.

"The result seems to be, that, although in ordinary times, even in cases of war, your gold coin may maintain itself in circulation, and the banking system of the country proceed in its accustomed course, yet that in other times such as we live in this is impossible, and it becomes indispensable to counteract the system of the enemy by one of corresponding energy. If you do not, the Bank must be either shut up or contract its issues to such an extent as to give an artificial value to the paper currency from its scarcity, equivalent to the rise in the price of gold. This may check the gold from going out of the kingdom, but at what sacrifice? At the risk of that terrible convulsion

to which lowering suddenly the value of all property in the country to a still greater amount must necessarily lead. The committee have laid it down that the Bank ought to be guided in the amount of their issues by the state of the exchanges and the price of gold. This must mean that they are to counteract the influence of the exchange by this means, and thus keep, it is said, by forcible means, our currency upon a level with the currency in the Continent. If this is done, the quantity of the circulating medium is not to depend on the wants of the community; it is not to depend upon its accustomed amount, with such additions from time to time as the augmented extent of our transactions may require, but it is to be regulated by a reference to our external intercourse, and to exchanges influenced by accidental causes, foreign wars, or events within the power of the enemy. Could you hold out a more powerful motive to the ruler of France to continue and multiply his restrictive efforts against our trade, than by showing him in this manner that by excluding our manufactures, and consequently draining us, as the only other means of exchange, of our gold, he can acquire a decisive influence over our prosperity, and destroy, by effecting a depreciation, half the property of the country?

24. Continued.

"The assertion that the bank issues have become excessive, and thence the drain of gold to the Continent, is founded upon an erroneous and deceptive statement of the case. It is true the issues of the Bank of England have increased since 1797 in the proportion of 10 to 19, and probably those of other banks have advanced in a similar proportion. But it by no means follows from that circumstance that the issue is either excessive or beyond what is required for the wants of the country. An army is not overfed if its rations are increased in proportion to the number of mouths required to be filled. If we compare the number of bank-notes now in circulation, including the issue of the private banks, with what

CHAP. VII. 1811.

they were in 1797, we shall find that it has hardly borne a proportion to the vast increase which has since taken place in trade, manufactures, agriculture, and revenue. The figures brought forward by the Chancellor of the Exchequer demonstrate this, and show, in particular, that the increase of taxation, the load which the country is compelled to bear, has been much greater than that of the notes which enables the country to bear it. The country possesses considerable security against over-issues, from the rapidity with which any excess is known to return to the bank. And the reality of this return is clearly evinced by what invariably happens a few days after the dividends are paid at the bank, generally amounting to several millions sterling. It reduces itself so rapidly, that after a few days there is scarce any addition perceptible to the amount of the circulating medium.

25. Continued.

"It may be admitted that the advance in the issue of bank-notes occasions a rise in the price of all kinds of produce, and this it is said must be injurious by checking the export of manufactures. It may be admitted that the facility of obtaining discounts may at first give an undue impulse to speculation, and occasion what is called overtrading, but is that an evil in all circumstances? What else is it but this adventurous spirit of commercial enterprise, which has enabled our merchants to contend against the decrees of the enemy, and to find out in the midst of war new channels for our superabundant produce? The evil will correct itself. The sagacity of the leaders, sharpened by experience, will ere long keep the borrower in check, and in the progress of time, though individuals may suffer, the nation will be benefited. The rise in prices, so much dwelt on on the other side, and represented as the greatest of public calamities, is, in truth, just the reverse. It is the mainspring of national prosperity, and the circumstance which has mainly enabled us to maintain the long and costly war into which we have been driven. An abundant circulation, by

causing an advance of prices, favours speculation and fosters industry, by making the price of produce keep ahead of the cost of production; a restrained circulation, by lowering prices, causes every mercantile speculation to issue in loss, and discourages reproduction, by causing it to terminate in disaster. Which of the two is most likely to support industry, or enable the nation to bear the burdens which are by unavoidable circumstances thrown upon it?

26. Continued.

"While I admit that the increased issue of paper has had the effect of raising prices of commodities of all sorts, I utterly deny that it has had the effect of depreciating paper in exchange for the precious metals. No man can say that the bank-note passes for less than its nominal value; that you will only get 17s., for example, for a £1-note. It is true a guinea is worth 28s., or a £5-note of the Bank of England will buy only £4, 5s. of gold; but that is not because paper is depreciated, but because gold is appreciated—because the circumstances of trade, the war in the Peninsula, and an impending contest in the North, have caused a run for gold to meet the necessities of the Continent. That this is the true solution of the phenomenon is evident from the circumstance, that the difference is equally conspicuous in the price of gold as compared with silver—in a guinea being worth 28s. as well as a £5-note of the Bank only £4, 5s. in gold. It is the excessive demand for gold to meet the necessities of the Continent which is the real cause of the enhanced value of that metal, which arises, like that of diamonds, from its portability and capability of concealment. Can it be imagined that the Bank of England is bound to purchase and keep gold to meet its own notes, and also to supply the necessities of the whole world? It is true the Bank, by contracting its issues and refusing discounts, and thus bringing ruin on all private, commercial, and banking establishments, might without delay, I have no doubt, pay off all its outstanding debts in gold. I have no doubt, also, notwithstanding

CHAP. VII. 1811.

the present disturbed state of the world, that by contracting its issues to three or four millions of notes, the Bank might continue to pay uninterruptedly in cash; the unnatural value thus given to the circulating medium from its scarcity counterbalancing the extraordinary demand for gold to send abroad. But the effect must be, that the nation, for all practical purposes, would be left without an adequate circulating medium, the Bank would suffer in a comparatively small degree, but the nation would be ruined.

27. Continued.

"Sir F. Baring, an authority entitled to the very highest respect, declares 'that he does not consider bank-notes to be depreciated;' and the Continental merchant referred to in the report says, 'Bank-notes may not represent what is on the face of them, because that something has risen in value, but something in fact equally real, though not equally available to equalise the balance of trade. What is called depreciation of the notes, is not the consequence of an over-issue, but of the enemy's measures; and it has not recovered for that reason, not because they are not convertible into cash.' Doubtless, as long as cash could be procured on demand and exported, the exchange and price of gold could never rise. But where is the gold to come from to equalise this account, when our extraordinary expenditure within the last two years for corn, foreign freights, and Government expenditure alone, exclusive of the price of our ordinary imports, is estimated at from twenty to twenty-five millions sterling, leaving a balance upon our whole payments, commercial and political, of from eight to seventeen millions against us. With such a balance against us, how is it possible for the banks or any other body to add to its stock of gold, so as to make a recurrence to cash payments? With such a balance against us, which must be provided for, how or where are we to purchase it abroad, or retain it in circulation, if we have got it? Are you prepared to withdraw your army from the Continent, to let down your expenditure, and abandon your allies, in order to bring the

exchanges round, and call back the precious metals. I can understand such a system, whatever I may think of it. But to continue your exertions against the enemy, and at the same time break down the system of currency, by which alone it has or can be supported, is the most impracticable thing that ever was attempted. CHAP. VII. 1811.

"The advantages are great of a local circulation of adequate and not superfluous amount, and duly secured, undisturbed in its operations by being directed to the liquidation of foreign demands. See this advantage in the most striking manner in the internal state of the empire at this moment. We feel the inconveniences of an adverse exchange in our foreign commerce, but it does not affect our internal prosperity in the slightest degree. The enemy may disturb us in the disposal of our surplus produce, in our external expenditure and supplies from the Continent, but he cannot affect our internal industry for our own markets in the smallest degree. How small, comparatively speaking, is the external question, and how absurd would it be for us to suffer our immense transactions at home to be deranged, by attempting to conform them to all the violent fluctuations which the enemy's lawless power can give to the Continental exchanges, and through it to the price of bullion! We have, happily, through the integrity and wealth of our Bank, and a state of credit between man and man unexampled in any other State, succeeded in realising a system which the enemy cannot shake, and which, if preserved, is likely, under Providence, to carry us safely through all our difficulties. Let us recollect the successive efforts which have been made by its opponents to shake this mighty empire, first by arms and invasion, next by Jacobinical principles and rebellion, latterly through the extinction of commerce. All these have failed, and he now rests his last hopes on shaking our safety through the destruction of our established currency, the instrument of our prosperity, and the source of all our power. It is 28. Continued.

CHAP. VII. 1811.

well known that when the report we are now considering was received in Paris at the close of last session, the ruler of France was on the point of abandoning his Continental System. But when he read that document he resolved to continue it, for he believed that he had at last struck us in a vulnerable point—that what had annoyed France had ruined Britain.

29. Concluded.

"Let it be recollected that I thoroughly admit a recurrence to cash payments, when circumstances will permit, to be essential to public credit. I rest my justification of the existing system upon the plea alone of an overruling necessity—a necessity not arising from an ordinary state of war, but arising out of the extraordinary and new principles on which the present contest has been conducted by the enemy. When the necessity ceases, I trust the system now in operation will cease with it; and I am sanguine in my belief that, with industry and commerce so flourishing, the return to our former habits, the drain of war being at an end, will not be a work of difficulty, and need not be a work of time. But, in the mean time, as it has been our policy in conducting the war to annoy the enemy abroad rather than await his attack on our own shores, so let us preserve that system of currency which enables us to confine his violence to the Continent, and to deny to him the power of interfering with or shaking the most vital branch of a system under which we flourish as a nation, and through the fruits of which we are enabled to maintain the contest on behalf of the world as well as ourselves."[1]

[1] Parl. Deb. xix. 986-1011.

30. Result of the debate. May 9 and 15, 1811.

Upon a division after this debate, Mr Horner's resolutions, which went to the adopting the report of the committee, were lost by a majority of 76, the numbers being 75 to 151; and the counter-resolutions of Mr Vansittart were carried by a majority of 40, the numbers being 82 to 42.[2]

[2] Parl. Deb. xix. 919-967-1126; xx. 73, 74-128.

The material parts of Lord Castlereagh's speech on this occasion have been transcribed thus at length, because they exhibit a favourable specimen of his peculiar style of

oratory—calm, weighty, and argumentative—as well as of his turn of mind, combining in a rare degree the principles of philosophy with the dictates of experience. This is the more remarkable from the contrast which it exhibits to the views adopted at the same time by the numerous and weighty body who composed the majority of the committee. It embraced all the leading political economists of the day—those whose writings had given the *Edinburgh Review* its great and deserved celebrity. The report was drawn up by Mr Horner. It had the cordial concurrence of Mr Huskisson, Mr Ricardo, Mr Ponsonby, Mr Tierney, and, except on the one point of resuming cash payments in two years, of Mr Canning. It was supported by the whole strength of the Whig party, united to that body, already respectable from their talents, who might be called the English *doctrinaires*, who afterwards, under the guidance of Sir Robert Peel, wrought so great a change in the commercial policy of Great Britain. Yet, strange to say, their doctrine was not less at variance with the principles of political economy than the evidence, nearly unanimous, of the whole practical men who were examined on the subject. It set at defiance the general principle that price is regulated by the proportion between supply and demand, and that the interests of commerce will cause an article in request to leave the country where it is cheap, and flow into the country where it is dear; it ignored the evidence of all the practical men, who ascribed the irresistible tendency to gold to go abroad to its being more in request on the Continent than in this country, and consequently bearing a higher price; it repudiated the idea that the unfavourable state of the exchanges indicated an outward tendency in the precious metals greater than the inward demand. Its authors had embraced one dogma to which they ascribed the whole—viz., that the over-issue of notes at home had driven the notes abroad; and they were resolute in their determination to ascribe everything to

CHAP. VII. 1811.

that, and that alone. Lord Castlereagh was held up as wedded to the old school, and behind the light of the age, because he refused to adopt this dogma, and in preference supported the simple principle that the coin was sent abroad because it bore a higher price there than it did at home. Which of these two opinions has been confirmed by the event, and is now generally adopted among men? Probably there is no man whose opinion is not warped by party or swayed by interest, who will not admit that Castlereagh was perfectly right, and his opponents entirely in the wrong on the occasion. In truth, his words descriptive of the effects of the untimely resumption of cash payments have proved prophetic. They have been too fatally realised by the result; and his opinions, original when uttered, but since confirmed by the seal of time, have received that vindication of all others the most decisive. At the time they were uttered they were denounced as paradox; they are now regarded as platitude.

32. What if the report of the committee had been adopted.

But this is not all. Not only has subsequent experience during the long peace completely established the truth of his principles, but the events of the war have proved not less decisively the vast importance of their having been uttered and given effect to by the Legislature at the time they were. The report of the committee, recommending the compulsory resumption of cash payments within two years, was dated 8th June 1810. The final debate on it took place on 15th May 1811. Had the recommendation of the committee been adopted on the first occasion, the crash would have come in England in the first week of June 1812, when Wellington was preparing to cross the Agueda to commence the Salamanca campaign, and Napoleon's forces were all converging towards the Niemen for the invasion of Russia; if on the second, it would have come on the eve of the triumphant march of the English general to Vitoria, immediately after the battle of Lutzen, and on the eve of the armistice of Pleswitz in Germany. We have only to figure the

monetary crises of 1825, 1838, 1847, and 1857, happening on any of these occasions, to form a conception of what must have occurred if the recommendation of the Bullion Committee had been carried into effect. Ruin, irrecoverable ruin, to British credit and finances, must have been the result, and with it the destruction of the whole system of European opposition to French domination on the Continent, at the very moment when it had been organised with the fairest prospect of success! If ever a country was saved by the efforts of individual men, it was by Mr Vansittart and Lord Castlereagh on this occasion.

33. Lord Castlereagh's speech on the battle of Albuera.

Ill health prevented Lord Castlereagh from taking a part in the debate on the Peninsular triumphs, and the vote of thanks to Lord Wellington for the campaign of 1810, when several of the Opposition, and in particular Mr Whitbread, so honourably retracted their former strictures on his military conduct. But on 7th June 1811, on occasion of the thanks of Parliament being moved to General Beresford for the victory of Albuera, he said: "Lord Wellington was under the necessity of showing a front to the enemy both at Badajos and Almeida, and it fell to General Beresford to decide whether he should wait for the reinforcements under Wellington, which he knew were approaching, or act with promptitude on the moment, trusting to his own resources. He took the manly and judicious step. A more glorious battle than that which ensued never was fought by the British, as was too fatally proved by the loss, which was as great, considering the numbers engaged, as even in the desperate struggle at Assaye. The intercepted letter of Soult proved how severely he had suffered: the British army remained in possession of the field, and was enabled to advance a corps against the retreating enemy. Deeply as every one must lament the heavy loss sustained in this memorable battle, yet we should err if we compared it with the results merely of the battle itself. The true

CHAP. VII. 1811.

test was to weigh it against the advantages of the whole campaign; and if this was done, it would be found that in no campaign had the sacrifice of human life been so small compared with the results produced by it. Lord Wellington had proved himself to be as sparing of the life of the soldier as he was careful of his health; and, checking his propensity to seek for glory, he bent his whole efforts to economising the existence of those placed under his command. The proportion of loss during the whole Peninsular campaign between the British and French armies, was immeasurably in favour of the former. Glorious as the struggle in Portugal had been, a great feature would be awanting if, after its conclusion, a trial of strength between the rival nations had not taken place upon the frontier.

34. Concluded.

"Up to the present moment, France has made but little real impression upon Spain. After all her victories, she has never been able to send forward one Spanish regiment to assist in the subjugation of the country. Whatever defects may exist in her military system, we must all recollect that Spain is not divided: she is not conquered. The same peculiarities, it may be defects, in her national character, which render her unmanageable in the hands of her friends, and incapable of efficient military co-operation, render her only the more indomitable towards her enemies. No nation has ever proved more true to herself than Spain, under circumstances the most adverse, has done. What might not be expected from her soldiers if they were taken into British pay, and disciplined by British officers, as the Portuguese have been! That alternative has never yet been presented to them, and it is doubtful whether but for that advantage the Portuguese would have offered the same resistance to the enemy that the Spaniards had done. But I do not wish to draw any invidious comparisons: both nations are fighting for their liberties; they have both displayed great energies; and I will only repeat what has been already said, that this great contest must be run out, and we must do our utmost in it. No man can predict

the final result; but the best way in which we can discharge our duty to posterity, and that which we owe to the present, is by doing our best, and leaving the rest in the hands of Providence. No one can doubt that the war as at present maintained is a great burden, but is any man prepared to say that the time has arrived when it should be abandoned?"[1]

[1] Parl. Deb. xx. 526, 527.

35. Great distress in Great Britain at this time.

Lord Castlereagh strongly felt that at this juncture (June 7, 1811) the war had become burdensome; for the fact was, that it had become so to such a degree that even the most sanguine were beginning to be inspired with desponding views in regard to its ultimate result. This arose, not so much from any want of success in the field, or doubts as to our ability to maintain the Peninsular contest and to defend Portugal, as from the exhausting effects of the struggle upon the industry and commerce of the country, and the multitudes of persons who had been reduced to short time, or thrown out of employment altogether, in consequence of the combined effect of Napoleon's Continental System, and the British retaliatory policy of the Orders in Council. It is well known that immediately after entering Berlin, in October 1806, in consequence of the battle of Jena, Napoleon, irritated by the blockades of the harbours in the north of Germany, which Mr Fox had proclaimed without, as he said, any sufficient force at sea to maintain it, issued the famous Berlin Decree, which declared all British goods found anywhere on the Continent, in the territories in alliance with France, or occupied by French armies, liable to confiscation, and ordered them to be instantly committed to the flames; and this was followed next year by a decree in similar, and still more stringent terms, issued from Milan, on the Emperor's return from the Polish war, after the battle of Friedland and treaty of Tilsit. These decrees by no means remained a dead letter. They were instantly acted upon with the utmost rigour in every place subject to the control of the French armies; and as that embraced at that period the

CHAP. VII. 1811.

whole territory from Cadiz to the Niemen, this amounted to an entire exclusion of British commerce, except in regard to that part of it, comparatively trifling, which could be introduced by smuggling.

36. The Orders in Council issued by the British Government.

It was very natural that the British Government, seeing such extreme measures adopted by the enemy, and the industry of its people so much injured by their effects, should have thought of retaliating in kind, and causing the subjects of the French Emperor to feel in their own persons the evils that the novel and outrageous method of war which he had adopted was causing them to experience. By so doing they might hope either to oblige him to return to the usual system of hostility between belligerent nations; or, if he persevered in it, to excite so widespread and intense a feeling of indignation against his government as might eventually lead to his overthrow. It was with this view that the British Orders in Council were issued, which in effect declared every vessel, with its cargo, good prize on the high seas, bound for any harbour under the French power, which had *not* touched at a British harbour. Thus Napoleon confiscated the vessels and their cargo if they *had come* from England, and the British Government confiscated them if they *had not*. It was difficult to see how neutral vessels or cargoes could avoid confiscation at the hand of one or other of these powers, or how any trade from foreign parts could by possibility be carried on. In fact, it would have been totally extirpated had not the *licensing system* been introduced, which, in consideration of large sums paid to the belligerent powers, granted licences from both to particular parties, securing them from capture or detention. As Lord Castlereagh was Minister at War, not for Foreign Affairs, at the time when this ruthless system of hostility was introduced, he was not peculiarly responsible for it; but its energetic character entirely coincided with his disposition; and although the Orders in Council were the work of the whole Cabinet, he was too manly not to take

his full share of the responsibility connected with their adoption.

Had there been no neutral powers whose trade was considerable to be affected by these measures, it was possible that the retaliatory system of the British Government might have proved effective, and that Napoleon, finding he suffered more than his enemies from these extreme measures, might have been led to abandon them. But nothing is more certain than that, if continental Europe was affected, England was injured in a still greater degree. This might have been anticipated when a struggle who was to starve first began. The commercial emporium, the manufacturing state, which exported its produce to all other countries, suffered more from a stoppage of trade than the other nations, which each in a lesser degree shared its advantages. In the one case the misery was concentrated in the centre; in the other it was diffused over the circumference. Sugar and coffee rose 100 per cent in the Continental markets, but bread and beef rose nearly as much in the British. Wheat was 105s. a-quarter, meat 1s. a-pound in England. Worse than this, the great diminution of the foreign trade deprived a great part of the working classes of the means of purchasing provisions at these extravagant rates. The exports of the empire, which, in 1809, in consequence of the withdrawing of the French Coast Guards from the north of Germany, after the battle of Aspern, had risen to £46,000,000, sank in 1811 to £29,000,000, lower than they had been since the renewal of the war. The consequence was, that distress in all the manufacturing districts was universal and intense beyond all precedent; and the unhappy operatives, ascribing their misery to the introduction of machinery, formed combinations in many places for its destruction; and the disorders thence arising were quelled only by the interposition of the military, and repeated melancholy exhibitions on the scaffold.

37. Their disastrous effects in Great Britain.

Experience soon showed that the greater part of this

CHAP. VII.

1811.

38. Effect of the American Non-intercourse Act.

distress was owing, not so much to Napoleon's Continental System as to the British Orders in Council passed in retaliation of it. The American Government, finding their vessels exposed to certain confiscation from one or other of the exasperated belligerents, adopted the course of withdrawing altogether from the scene of danger. They passed a Non-intercourse Act, which prohibited all commercial intercourse with either of the contending parties, and caused the American flag almost to disappear from the ocean. The effect of this decisive step upon the commerce and industry of Great Britain was beyond all measure disastrous. The British exports to North America were then £15,000,000—worth, as Mr Brougham stated in the debate which ensued on the subject, all other foreign markets put together. It was the closing of this immense vent for our manufactured produce which was the cause of the unparalleled depression of our foreign trade during the year 1811; and although British energy and enterprise had opened several new and circuitous channels of commerce, yet they were far from compensating those which had been lost; and the finances of the country, as a necessary consequence, were far from being in a prosperous state. In a word, the empire was in a more dangerous situation than it had been since the war began. Allies, except the Spaniards and Portuguese, we had none on continental Europe; and although the war then still lingered in the Peninsula, and Wellington as yet showed an undaunted front to the enemy, yet it was rather from confidence in his abilities and the valour of his troops, and a stern resolution not to be beaten, than from any general hope that it would ultimately prove successful, that the contest was maintained.

Such was the state of affairs, when an unexpected series of events restored Lord Castlereagh to office, and that too in the all-important appointment of Foreign Secretary, which he thereafter held to the time of his death.

To understand how this came about, it must be premised that Marquess Wellesley, who had succeeded Mr Canning in the Foreign Office on the latter's leaving office in September 1809 in consequence of the duel with Lord Castlereagh, having become dissatisfied with the support which Mr Perceval's Cabinet gave to the war in the Peninsula, and, above all, the want of specie to provide for the wants of the army, of which Lord Wellington so loudly complained, had tendered his resignation in the first week of 1812. The Prince Regent, however, earnestly entreated his lordship to resume office at least in the mean time; and as there was a prospect of a new Ministry being formed upon the expiry of the restrictions upon the Prince Regent, which came to an end in the February following, the request was acceded to, and Marquess Wellesley withdrew his resignation. The anticipated change of Ministry, however, did not take place at that time, although the Prince Regent tendered the government to the Whig leaders, in consequence of the difficulty of forming an extended administration in the arduous state of public affairs. The result was that the Tories were continued in power, and Lord Wellesley, upon this, a second time tendered his resignation, which was accepted. Lord Castlereagh was immediately selected as his successor, and entered upon the duties of his new appointment in the beginning of March, at the very time when his brother, Sir Charles Stewart, returned, from ill health, from the important situation which he held in the Peninsular army.

39. Events which led to Lord Castlereagh being appointed Foreign Secretary.

Feb. 28, 1812.

A dreadful and unexpected event occurred soon after, which to all appearance gave the Whigs a permanent lease of power. On the 11th May, as Mr Perceval was entering the lobby of the House of Commons, he was shot through the heart by a person of the name of Bellingham, who thought he had been injured by some of that minister's measures in his commercial transactions in the Baltic some years before, and unduly refused redress at the

40. Assassination of Mr Perceval. May 11.

CHAP. VII. 1812.

hands of Government. The man was evidently labouring under a mental hallucination, but not to the extent of rendering him irresponsible for his actions; and he was condemned and executed with a precipitance which bespoke rather the aroused indignation of an offended people than the calm administration of public justice. This tragic event, to all appearance, opened to the Whigs the certain path to power; for not only were the inclinations of the Prince Regent, founded on early predilection and long friendship, known to be strongly in favour of that party, but the Prime Minister in power, and the most resolute opponent of the Catholic claims, on which the formation of the Ministry in a great degree depended, was no more. The Prince, in consequence, immediately sent for Lord Wellesley, and charged him with the duty of forming a Government on the principle of taking in the ablest men on both sides. This mission, however, as is generally the case with undertakings of the kind, was found to be impracticable, from irreconcilable differences of opinion on material points between the leading statesmen on opposite sides; and Earl Moira was then sent for. This mission, it was generally thought, would prove successful, as he was commissioned to form an exclusively Whig Administration. Contrary, however, to expectation, it too failed, after depending a considerable time, in consequence of the Whig leaders insisting upon having the nomination to certain household situations in the palace, which the Prince Regent was not inclined to concede to them. The consequence was, that the Prince Regent immediately intrusted Lord Liverpool with the formation of an Administration composed entirely of his own party. This was quickly arranged. All the present Ministers were retained in their places, including Lord Castlereagh in the important one of Minister for Foreign Affairs. With that office he was intrusted with the still more arduous and vital one of Leader of the House of Commons;[1] and he held both situations from that time till his death, ten

[1] Parl. Deb. xxiii. 256, 381-423; Appendix, i. 43; Ann. Reg. 1812, 84-90.

years afterwards. Thenceforward the history of Great Britain becomes chained to his biography.

The first important subject which was brought before Parliament after the interregnum and lull of public business produced by the negotiations for the change of Ministry, was the repeal of the Orders in Council. This vital question was intrusted to Mr Brougham; and it could not have fallen into the hands of an abler or more zealous advocate. The subject itself had become one of universal and overwhelming moment; for in consequence, on the one hand, of the Continental System for the exclusion of British manufactures, so rigidly enforced by the French Emperor, and, on the other, of the Non-intercourse Act passed by the American Legislature, the exports of the country had sunk in an alarming degree, and, as already mentioned, had amounted in the last year only to £29,000,000. This state of affairs was not lost on Mr Brougham. The facts on which he rested, and which would admit of no dispute, were of the gravest character, and proved that the question was not only vital to the interests of the empire, but that the greater part of the danger came from a quarter within the reach of remedy, to all appearance at least, from the British Parliament. He strongly contended that the alarming decline in our exports was owing not so much to the hostility of Napoleon, inveterate as it was, or the Continental System, widely extended as his victories had caused it to become, as to the British Orders in Council, which had given rise to the American Non-intercourse Act, and lost to us the North American market. This would be regained only by repealing the Orders in Council, and thus reopening on the other side of the Atlantic the harbours of our best and most growing customers. "It is not," said Mr Brougham, "a figure of speech, but the simple truth, to affirm that, circumstanced as the two countries are, there is not an axe falls in the woods of America which does not put in motion some shuttle, or wheel, or hammer, in

41. Debate on the Orders in Council. June 16.

CHAP. VII. 1812.

England. Is it the miserable, shuffling, doubtful traffic in the north of Europe and the Mediterranean, which we prefer to the sure, regular, and increasing North American trade—a trade placed beyond the reach of the enemy's power, and which supports at once all that remains of the liberty of the seas, and gives life and vigour to the main pillar within the realm—the commerce and manufactures of England? Look to the other side of the picture. If you continue the cessation of intercourse with America much longer, the inevitable consequence will be that the Americans will be driven to the necessity of supplying themselves with manufactures. They have the means of doing so within their own bounds; coal and water-carriage in abundance are to be found in their country; and the vast fortunes already accumulated in their seaport towns prove that they are noways deficient in the true commercial spirit. We can have no jealousy of America, whose armies are yet at the plough, or making, since your policy has so willed it, awkward attempts at the loom; whose assembled navies could not lay siege to an English man-of-war. The nation is already deeply embarked in the Spanish war; let us not then run the risk of adding another to the already formidable league of our enemies, and reduce ourselves to the necessity of feeding Canada with troops from Portugal, and Portugal with bread from England."[1]

[1] Parl. Deb. xxiii. 486-522.

42. Lord Castlereagh's reply. June 16.

Amidst some exaggeration, which seems inseparable from Lord Brougham's oratory, there was much truth in these eloquent words. Lord Castlereagh took the only manly and patriotic course in these circumstances; he at once gave the Orders in Council up. From the beginning, they had been a political, not a commercial measure; and when it appeared that the commercial evils attendant on them outstripped the political advantages, the time had come when they should be abandoned. The noble lord accordingly said: "No question more vital, both to the national security and the commercial interests of the

country, ever came before Parliament. There can be no doubt that a case of grave distress to the manufacturing classes has been made out in the evidence, and there is reason to fear that if the North American market is not speedily opened that suffering will be augmented. Even, however, if the repeal of the Orders in Council would occasion the abrogation of the American Non-intercourse Act, it does by no means follow that the original imposition of these Orders was not called for by necessity, and justified by expedience. Was it to be expected that Great Britain was tamely to have submitted to the iniquitous decrees of France without any attempt at retaliation? As against France, the retaliating system adopted has perfectly succeeded. Severely as our commerce has suffered in the struggle, hers has suffered still more considerably. From the official accounts published by the French Government, it appears that even with their population of forty millions, the total amount of their manufactures for the home market and exportation taken together was only, in 1810, £54,000,000, while that of Great Britain and Ireland, for both, with a population of only 17,000,000, was £66,000,000. With the exception of the year 1811, which, from temporary causes, was one of great depression, the preceding years, when the Orders in Council were in operation, were periods of extraordinary and unprecedented prosperity. The average of our exports to continental Europe for three years before the passing of the Orders in Council was £17,500,000; for three years subsequent, £23,000,000. Can more convincing proof be desired that the machinations of the French Emperor for our destruction have not only failed in their object, but recoiled upon himself?

"It is therefore not the effect of the Orders in Council or the Continental System of the enemy which has caused the distress so severely felt in this country during the last years, but the interruption of our commercial intercourse with America, in consequence of the Non-inter-

43. Continued.

CHAP. VII. 1812.

course Act passed in that country. But though this may now be admitted, it affords no argument against the original expedience of those measures: on the contrary, quite the reverse. Such an extreme measure on their part was not in the ordinary course of events, and it was not to be calculated upon. The American Government might have seen that the Orders in Council were adopted by the English Cabinet as a measure of retaliation only; that they were issued after the Berlin Decree, under the pressure of necessity; and that if these defensive measures proved, as doubtless they did, injurious in a very high degree to the interests of American commerce, their enmity should have been directed against France, the primary cause of this destructive system of hostility, instead of this country, which was driven to it only in self-defence. No pains were spared, when this system was of necessity adopted, to render it as little as possible oppressive to neutral powers; an instance of which disposition is to be found in the Order of 1809, limiting the blockade to France and the countries under her immediate control. The licence system, when properly understood, was no departure from the principle of the Orders in Council: not a fifth of them were intended to evade these orders: four-fifths of them arose from the necessity under which the enemy was laid of escaping the stringent effect of our measure. We did, however, offer to forego all the advantages of the licence system, and revert to the strict Order of 1807, if the Government of the United States would repeal the Non-intercourse Act; but hitherto they have shown no disposition to embrace such an offer.

44. Concluded.

"The Prince Regent long ago issued a declaration, bearing that as soon as the Berlin and Milan Decrees were repealed, the British Government would withdraw the Orders in Council; and the French Cabinet have recently communicated to the American Government a resolution, apparently consenting to abandon these Decrees if the British Orders in Council were at the same time repealed.

That declaration, however, is not sufficiently explicit to authorise the British Government to act upon it, and it seems to be virtually abrogated by the sweeping declaration recently made by the Duke of Bassano (Maret), that the Berlin and Milan Decrees will remain in force till the maritime pretensions of this country shall be abandoned. But the British Government is fully disposed to receive the olive branch tendered, whether in good or bad faith, by the French ruler; she is willing, for a time, to suspend the Orders in Council, if the American Government will repeal the Non-intercourse Act. The sincerity of France will thereby be put to the test, and a breathing time gained in the midst of this mortal hostility, during which an opportunity will be afforded for a return to a more civilised species of warfare. If this experiment fails, and France persists in her frantic system of warfare, we must return to our retaliating system; but if driven to do so, we shall at least have the consolation of reflecting that we have shown every disposition to concede all the just demands of the neutral powers. And such a return would, it is hoped, not again lead to any interruption of the amicable relations between this country and her transatlantic offspring, which it is the curse of both countries should ever have been broken."[1]

[1] Parl. Deb. xxiii. 522-536.

45. Repeal of the Orders in Council. June 23.

No division took place upon this able and interesting debate, it being understood on both sides of the House that Government had resolved to take the matter into their own hands, and that an unconditional repeal of the Orders in Council would soon appear. This expectation was not disappointed. On the 23d June an Order appeared in the *London Gazette* repealing the Orders in Council unconditionally, but with the declaration, that if the American Government did not, after due notice, repeal the Non-intercourse Act, this revocation should become null, and the original Orders revive. The American Government, however, did not accept the olive branch thus tendered to them. Before intelligence of this

CHAP. VII. 1812.

conciliatory measure had crossed the Atlantic, war was already declared by them, not against France, the original aggressor in the injury to neutrals, but against Great Britain, which had acted only in self-defence. The party in America, unhappily too numerous, which was set on foreign conquest and external aggression, deemed the opportunity favourable for conquering the Canadas, when Great Britain, as they thought, was at the last extremity in the war with Napoleon.

46. Situation of Europe when Lord Castlereagh returned to power.

Lord Castlereagh, on assuming the helm of foreign affairs in the beginning of March 1812, found affairs, both in the Peninsula and in Northern Europe, in the most interesting and critical situation. Wellington had six weeks before stormed Ciudad Rodrigo, and preparations were making for an attack on Badajos. Napoleon was directing all his disposable forces in France, Germany, and Italy towards the Vistula; and Alexander, calm but resolute, was gathering up the forces of his mighty empire to resist the Western crusade. The first care of Lord Castlereagh on his accession to office was to write to Sir Henry Wellesley, Lord Wellington's brother, Minister at Cadiz, in the kindest manner, offering to continue him in his appointment, which was accepted.* Although Lord Castlereagh's courteous feelings made him allude to the

* "I shall not detain you by expressing my regret that the public service has been deprived of Lord Wellesley's talents at a moment when, in many points of view, and in none more than with reference to the great cause of the Peninsula, they were of so much value; neither shall I attempt to describe how sensible I am of the great change it must operate in your feelings to have to conduct the duties of your situation with one so much less conversant with the subjects in discussion, and so much less entitled to your personal confidence. But I trust we are sufficiently known to each other to authorise me to assure you, with the utmost sincerity, that it will afford me the greatest personal gratification if I should be so fortunate as to succeed in reconciling you to remain under the change that has unfortunately taken place. I do not feel entitled to expect that my wishes can be conclusive on that point; but I look to the interest the public have in not being deprived of your experienced services at the present moment, and to the importance the Prince Regent attaches to your continuing to represent his Royal Highness in the Spanish Embassy, for reconciling you to remain at Cadiz."—LORD CASTLEREAGH *to* SIR HENRY WELLESLEY, *Foreign Office, March* 3, 1812; *Castlereagh Correspondence* viii. 245, 246.

change in the Foreign Office as a matter of regret to Sir Henry, yet there can be no doubt that it was in reality a source of secret congratulation both to him and Lord Wellington. Great as Lord Wellesley's abilities undoubtedly were, they were not of the *commanding* kind of Lord Castlereagh's, nor so well qualified to contend with the almost hopeless difficulties with which the empire was beset in the beginning of 1811. All his efforts, seconded by those of Lord Wellington, had been unable to induce the preceding Administration to make efforts commensurate to the occasion, or worthy of the strength and majesty of the empire. His position in consequeuce had become so painful to him, that he could no longer endure it, and it was the strength of this feeling, as already mentioned, which had led to his resignation. Lord Wellington was not less chagrined than his illustrious brother at the disregard of their combined representations, which, from terror of public clamour about expense, had been displayed by the late Cabinet, and his feelings exhaled in bitter complaints against the "Republic of a Cabinet," which could not be induced to do anything really worthy of the occasion—an opinion which will probably, to the end of the world, be shared by all who in arduous circumstances are brought in contact with a Board, or other small body of men, not thoroughly subjugated by one commanding spirit.

47. Great change produced by Lord Castlereagh's accession to office.

When matters were in this state between the British Government and their Foreign Minister and illustrious General, it was a most fortunate circumstance that a change took place at this crisis of the war, which at once restored *singleness of direction* to the Cabinet, and an adequate degree of support to the General in the field. Although, as Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lord Castlereagh was not immediately brought in contact with the Commander-in-Chief, and the official correspondence of the latter was with the Earl of Liverpool, yet he soon communicated the impress of his mind to the whole Ministry, and gained

CHAP. VII. 1812.

that ascendancy over his colleagues which a superior, and, above all, courageous mind, never fails to acquire in the presence of danger. His own disposition led him decidedly to adopt the system of *la grande guerre*, which he had commenced when turned out of office by the Whigs in 1806. He was fully sensible of the immense importance of prosecuting the war in the Peninsula in the most vigorous manner at this period, when the greater part of the forces, and the chief attention of the enemy, were fixed on a Russian war of unexampled magnitude; and a favourable opportunity was presented during the double strain on the French empire of regaining the lost footing in Spain, and possibly chasing the enemy altogether over the Pyrenees.

48. Forces of Great Britain at this time, and their distribution.

Fortunately for Great Britain and the cause of European independence, the military force at the disposal of its Cabinet at this time greatly exceeded what they had been at any former period of the contest. After providing amply for the defence of the British Islands, upwards of 100,000 men could be spared for foreign service, of whom 60,000 or 70,000 could be assembled at one point, and under a single general. Great Britain at that period had a military force of 646,000 men, of whom 194,000 were effective regulars, 84,000 regular militia, and 369,000 volunteers, or local militia. So successful had been the military system introduced by Lord Castlereagh when War Minister in 1806, already given, that, notwithstanding the bloody war in the Peninsula which had been waged, the military force was 50,000 greater than it had been at the commencement of the period. Lord Castlereagh now saw his project realised of carrying on *la grande guerre* against Napoleon, and having 60,000 men ready and disposable to carry the war into any part of the enemy's dominions which might be deemed advisable.

He was not slow, after his return to office, in the beginning of March 1812, in carrying his designs into execution, and preparing to turn to the best advantage the extraor-

dinary imprudence committed by Napoleon in accumulating his forces against Russia before he had terminated the war in Spain. The utmost efforts were made in every direction to purchase specie to send out for the use of the army; and although the price paid was always high, sometimes as much as 29s. for a guinea, a considerable sum was collected, and forthwith forwarded. The efforts at the same time made to augment the army, especially in cavalry, in which arm it had hitherto been very deficient, were on the greatest scale, and such as put a force at the disposal of the British general superior to any Great Britain had ever before had in the field. From a return of the armies in the Peninsula and the Mediterranean, on 25th June 1812, when Lord Wellington crossed the Agueda and led his forces into Spain, he had under his command 51,000 English troops, of whom 6546 were cavalry, in the finest condition; while the Portuguese were 36,452 men, of whom 2500 were horse. This was independent of nearly 40,000 in Gibraltar, Cadiz, Sicily, Malta, and the Ionian Islands. This great force, which, of course, had received a considerable diminution during the Salamanca campaign, was further fed by 20,000 reinforcements, which were sent out between the beginning of June and the middle of November. In a word, England now, for the first time in the war, appeared on the theatre of contest on a scale worthy of her present strength and ancient renown. And if we would find whom we have to thank for the preparation of this great military force, and the decisive use made of it under Wellington's guidance in the memorable campaign which followed, we have to turn to Lord Castlereagh.[1]

49. Military forces at Wellington's disposal, and Lord Castlereagh's great efforts to increase it.

[1] Castlereagh Corresp. viii. 248, 249.

That statesman had soon his sincerity and firmness put to the test. Napoleon, when on the eve of setting out for the Russian campaign, made proposals of peace to Great Britain. The terms now offered were,—"That France should renounce all extension of her empire on the side of the Pyrenees; that the *reigning dynasty* in

50. Napoleon's proposals of peace to Britain, and Lord Castlereagh's answer. April 17 and 23.

CHAP. VII. 1812.

Spain should be declared independent, and the country governed by the national constitution of the Cortes; that the independence and security of Portugal should be guaranteed, and the house of Braganza reign in that kingdom; that the kingdom of Naples should remain in the hands of the present ruler (Murat), and that of Sicily with its existing king; and that Spain, Portugal, and Italy should be evacuated by the French and British forces, both by sea and land; and that all other points in dispute between the parties should be arranged on the footing that each is to keep what the other cannot take away." To these proposals Lord Castlereagh replied, in the name of the British Government, that if by the term "reigning dynasty" the French Government meant the royal Government in Spain as now vested in Joseph Buonaparte and the Cortes established under his authority, and not the rule of Ferdinand VII., the true monarch of that country, and the Cortes assembled under his authority, no negotiation could be admitted on such a basis. The Continental historians generally represent this offer on the part of the French Emperor—which in effect gave up the whole objects in dispute, on account of which the war had been renewed in 1803—as insincere on his part, and intended only to sow dissension between Great Britain and her Continental allies, by spreading the belief that she was willing to listen to proposals for separate accommodation. But a little consideration must show that he was perfectly sincere *at that time* in desiring a peace with England. Not that he had in one iota abated his hostility against that power, or swerved from his determination ultimately to effect its subjugation, but that he was desirous to wait the proper time for doing so. He recollected the narrow escape he had made in 1809 from having Madrid taken, and the fleet at Antwerp destroyed, while he was hard pressed by the Archduke Charles on the banks of the Danube, and he would gladly have avoided a repetition of the risk. He desired

nothing more than to see Wellington's sword sheathed, and the fleets of Great Britain motionless in their harbours, while he was beating down the last champion of Continental independence, and preparing, as at Tilsit, a fresh crusade of the whole maritime force of the Continent against this country.

51. Lord Castlereagh's cautious policy as to Italy.

It will be seen from the considerable British force stationed at this period in the neighbourhood of Italy, amounting, in Sicily, Corfu, and Malta, to not less than 30,000 men, that operations on an extensive scale were contemplated in the Italian peninsula, with a view to aid the diversion in favour of Russia going on under Wellington in Spain. Such a design necessarily implied a movement on the part of the inhabitants of Italy, who were now entirely subjugated by, and their resources applied to the support of, the French Emperor. There could be no doubt of the importance of such an attempt in the great contest, from the Niemen to Cadiz, which was now approaching; but, on the other hand, it would, if successful, involve several diplomatic difficulties, and bring Great Britain abreast of many delicate questions of international law. Revolutionary interests and passions might be awakened in the course of the struggle, alike inconsistent with the engagements of England with the ancient governments, and the general policy of the Allies with a view to the future peace and independence of Europe. Lord Castlereagh in consequence wrote a letter to Lord William Bentinck, who had at once the highest military and diplomatic situation in the Mediterranean, which is a model of combined wisdom and liberality in a British Minister. It held out the chance of his being called on to aid a liberating movement in the Italian peninsula, and authorised his doing so; but at the same time strongly cautioned him against taking the initiative in any such movement, or intervening at all in the internal affairs of that country; and urged the policy of presenting to the inhabitants of the mainland, in Sicily, which was under

CHAP. VII. 1812.

our immediate control, a model of a constitutional monarchy, under the ancient sovereigns, abreast of the wishes of the age, and containing the requisite safeguards against corruptions and abuse. Subsequent events have rendered this remarkable despatch at once interesting and prophetic.*

52. Diplomatic relations with Russia.

As to Russia herself, the principal in the terrible duel on the Niemen which was approaching, the diplomatic relations of Great Britain, even when war with France was evidently approaching, were for some time not such as were desirable and might have been expected. The Emperor Alexander had been profoundly hurt by the ill-judged refusal, on the part of the Whig Administration, in spring 1807, to give him any assistance. Little acquainted with

* "My Dear Lord,—In transmitting to your Lordship the enclosed confidential papers, my object is to put you in possession of the language which has been held here in the name of the royal family in Sicily on the subject of the events which have lately taken place there under your influence, the manner in which these communications have been received by me, and the report which has been made to the Sicilian Government of the feelings entertained by his Royal Highness's Government of the conduct of our allies in that quarter. . . .

"I have not thought it necessary in my public letter to allude to the propositions submitted by you to the hereditary prince, in answer to his demand that the troops at your disposal should be employed in Italy; but it may, nevertheless, be expedient that your Lordship should understand that this Government could not indeed approve of your originating any measure which might look like an invitation to the Neapolitans to proceed to the election of a sovereign, although the issue of such election might probably be the restoration of the family of Bourbon. We have not acknowledged the usurped dynasty of Naples, and therefore in our eyes Ferdinand II. is the rightful sovereign of that country; and your Lordship will carefully avoid any language which might directly imply the contrary.

"It would certainly be very desirable that the Neapolitans should rise against their present masters, and in favour of the rights of their former sovereign; and in order to excite such a spirit, I am aware how important it is that they should be taught to expect a correction of former abuses; but on many accounts it would be preferable that the restoration of Ferdinand II., however voluntary on the part of his continental subjects, should be in fact a restoration rather than an election. The improvements which are likely to be adopted in the Sicilian constitution will pave the way for this event, and serve as a pledge of what they may expect; and under the corrections and alterations which some of the articles are susceptible of, and appear to require, there is a fair prospect of Sicily holding out to Italy and to Naples the safe and honourable example of a reformation without violence, and a regenerated constitution under the sanction, and with the aid, of the legitimate sovereign."—Lord Castlereagh *to* Lord William Bentinck, *Foreign Office, September* 26, 1812; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, viii. 275, 276.

the usages of a constitutional monarchy, he was not aware of the *entire change of policy, both foreign and domestic,* with which a change of ministry is often attended. He could not be brought to put any trust, therefore, in assurances of support from this country, and resolved to defend himself, and retire, if necessary, into Siberia, rather than submit to the demands of the French Emperor. These demands were, the entire and rigorous execution of the Continental System against Great Britain; acquiescence in the spoliation of the Emperor Alexander's sister, the Duchess of Oldenberg; and the dismissal of the defensive armaments raised in Russia. But of these the cordial entrance of Russia into the Continental System was by far the most important; and if the Czar would have gone in to that, peace could have been concluded and intimacy re-established even at the eleventh hour. It is a striking proof of the extreme distrust which had been sown in the Emperor's mind by the ill-judged parsimony of the British Government in 1807, that even now, when his empire was put in extreme hazard from the necessity of upholding, in some degree, the commercial connection with Great Britain, he declined to receive any assistance from its Government.

53. Treaty between Russia and Turkey. May 28.

But although, from the resolution of the Russian Emperor to defend himself alone, Great Britain was, in the first instance, debarred from rendering any material assistance in the terrible struggle which was approaching, yet, in the alliances which she contributed to form for him, she rendered the most effective assistance. When the war between these two great potentates broke out, Russia was still engaged in the contest with Turkey, which had begun soon after the treaty of Tilsit. It was obviously of the very highest importance that it should be terminated, and the Russian force there, full 60,000 strong, rendered available to withstand the formidable invasion which threatened them from the westward. This, however, at first was no easy matter. It seemed clear at first sight that it was for

CHAP. VII.

1812.

the interest of Turkey, so far from terminating hostilities with Russia, to prosecute them with redoubled vigour, now that so powerful an ally as the French Emperor was hastening to her assistance. Napoleon has repeatedly since said that this was so obviously for the interest of the Turks, and their folly in coming to an understanding with Russia at this crisis was so great, that it exceeded all the bounds of human calculation, and relieves him from all responsibility regarding its effects. So it would probably have proved, if it had not been for the duplicity and bad faith of Napoleon himself. But these were of such a kind as when once made known could not be forgiven, and now came to fall with decisive effect against him. Lord Castlereagh, in conjunction with the Russian Government, revealed to the Divan the secret articles of the treaty of Tilsit, in which the two contracting powers had agreed on the partition of Turkey—Russia getting Wallachia, Moldavia, Bessarabia, and Bulgaria; and France, Albania, Greece, and the islands of the Archipelago. Alexander offered Egypt to Napoleon on condition of Russia getting Constantinople; but to this the French Emperor would not agree. Austria disclosed the offers made to her of getting Servia and Bosnia, on condition of winking at the scheme of plunder; and Czerny George gave similar information as to the first of these provinces. The Turkish Government were struck with consternation at this intelligence; and they arrived at the conclusion, not without reason, that, as the two great Continental powers were thus set upon their destruction, their only chance of safety lay in balancing the one against the other, and that instant destruction would follow the concentration of the whole military strength of Europe in the hands of Napoleon. Influenced by these views, they concluded a peace with Russia on 28th May 1812; and this was soon after followed by one with Great Britain, which was concluded by Lord Castlereagh on 18th July following.[1] As an immediate

[1] See Treaties in Martens, iii. 226, 397; Valentini, 178-180; Jomini, iii. 545; Bign. vi. 336; Thiers, vii. 648, 649, and viii. 449, 450.

consequence of this pacification, fifty thousand Russians, under Admiral Tchichagoff, instantly broke up from the banks of the Danube to take a part in the approaching contest on the Sarmatian plains.

54. Lord Castlereagh's efforts to effect a treaty between Sweden and Russia.

On the other flank of the great campaign which was approaching, Lord Castlereagh laboured not less assiduously, and with equal success, to secure for the Russians the support of which they stood so much in need to withstand the accumulated forces of Western Europe. Sweden was a power which, though by no means of the first order, yet would become one of great importance in the approaching conflict, from its geographical position on the flank of the contending parties, and the well-known military talents of the fortunate chief who had now obtained the direction of its affairs. Bernadotte had been chosen by the Swedes of their own free will, rather against than in pursuance of the wishes of Napoleon; but, being extremely ambitious, he no sooner found himself on the steps of the throne than he resolved to make the most of his old connection with the French Emperor to obtain Norway, the grand object of his ambition. For this purpose, when it had become evident that a war between Napoleon and Russia was approaching, he offered the former to put his whole resources at his disposal if he would guarantee him the possession of this much-coveted kingdom. This, however, would have immediately induced a rupture with Denmark; and, although it is probable the French Emperor would have been as little disquieted at the thoughts of partitioning an ancient ally as he had been at the thoughts of delivering over his friends the Turks to the tender mercies of the Russians, yet political considerations of the highest importance forbade such a step. Denmark was still nearer to the scene of the approaching conflict than Sweden, and the situation of her dominions, having in a manner the command of the entrances into the Baltic, rendered her alliance of great importance as a check both on Russia and England. He declined the offer of alliance, therefore, at the price of

CHAP. VII.

1812.

Norway, but reiterated, in the most menacing manner, his threats of instant hostilities if the harbours of Sweden were not shut, and war declared against Great Britain. Deterred by these threats, Bernadotte no longer hesitated, and war was declared against Great Britain on 18th November 1810. But notwithstanding this constrained compliance, the refusal of Norway rankled in the breast of the Crown Prince, and induced him to look out on the earliest opportunity for fresh alliances. He still continued underhand to permit a commercial intercourse with Great Britain, at which the French Emperor was so much irritated that, in January 1812, the French troops entered Pomerania, confiscated all the British goods in the harbours, levied enormous contributions on the inhabitants, and began to seize the whole revenue for the imperial treasury.[1]

[1] Hard. xi. 113-135; Schoell, ix. 96-101; Bign. ix. 340.

55. Peace with Sweden on condition of her getting Norway.

Lord Castlereagh was not slow in turning these events to the best account at the Court of Stockholm, on his accession to the Foreign Office, in the beginning of March. He lost no time in despatching a very able minister, Mr Thornton, to that capital, to co-operate with the Russian diplomatists in the attempt to detach Bernadotte altogether from the French connection, and bring him in good earnest to the side of the alliance. Mr Thornton was well received by the Crown Prince, who professed the most anxious desire to restore amicable relations with Great Britain; but he made no concealment of his determination to make the cession of Norway, upon an indemnity being provided to Denmark, the price of his actively joining the Russians. Lord Castlereagh felt the greatest repugnance at thus handing over a whole kingdom, without the consent of its inhabitants, to a new master, although, as we were at war with Denmark, and she had resisted all offers of accommodation, there was nothing contrary to the law of nations in so doing. But the circumstances were so critical that there was no alternative. The accession of Sweden, or at least its

neutrality, was indispensable to Russia, and might determine the fate of the campaign, and the emancipation of the Continent from French subjugation. This could be gained on no other terms. Russia took the lead in the arrangement. On the 5th and 8th April 1812, treaties were concluded between the Courts of St Petersburg and Stockholm, by which the two contracting parties mutually guaranteed each other's possessions; and it was stipulated on the one hand that, in the event of a war with France, Sweden was to assist Russia with a corps of 30,000 men, who were to operate in conjunction with 20,000 Russians in the north of Germany; and in return, that the Emperor of Russia was to *guarantee Norway to Sweden*, upon Denmark receiving an adequate compensation in Pomerania. In the event of the latter power refusing to accede to this arrangement, Russia was to aid Sweden with 35,000 men to co-operate in the conquest of Norway. These treaties were kept at the time a profound secret, but they were in confidence communicated to the British Government, and they received from Lord Castlereagh a favourable reception, though he did not make England a party to them. Peace, however, was concluded soon after between Great Britain and Sweden, at Orebro, on 12th July. Amicable relations were immediately established between the two powers, and the Swedish harbours opened to British vessels.[1]

July 12. [1] Schoell, x. 101-107; Martens, Sup. i. 431; Bign. x. 408; Thiers, xiii. 476-491.

56. Chances of the approaching Russian campaign.

Thus everything combined to induce a struggle of unheard-of magnitude and importance between France and Russia in Eastern Europe. Napoleon wielded a host of unparalleled magnitude and surpassing efficiency. Never since the beginning of the world had such an array followed the banners of a single chief. Absolute master of France, Italy, and the half of Germany, with Austria and Prussia as his attendant vassals, he led on four hundred thousand admirable soldiers, of whom eighty thousand were horse, with thirteen hundred guns! Russia was far from having an equal array to oppose to this crusade. Her whole

CHAP. VII. 1812.

regular forces on the frontier hardly amounted to two hundred and twenty thousand men. There was the greatest danger that on this, as on former occasions, terror of the mighty conqueror might achieve more than his physical force, great as it was, would be able to effect; and that the Russian Emperor, seeing his empire pierced to the heart, and Moscow or St Petersburg in the hands of the invader, might deem the contest hopeless, and bend his neck in silence to the stroke of fate. But, on the other hand, if the first spring of the foe was withstood, and the Czar adhered firmly to his declared resolution to retire to Siberia rather than submit, dangers of a still more appalling kind might await the ruthless invader. During the advance the army might be straitened and starved from the effect of its immense numbers. If forced to carry on the war in winter, it would certainly perish from the severity of the climate.

Though Russia in conscious strength combated alone in her own territory, she had powerful allies on the circumference of her enemy's dominion. Wellington at the head of sixty thousand British and Portuguese veterans threatened the French forces on the Douro, and would probably conclude a glorious campaign by driving them over the Ebro; the peace with Turkey had liberated fifty thousand Russians from the banks of the Danube, who might soon threaten the rear of the invading force; while thirty thousand Swedes and as many Muscovites menaced his left flank. Thus, brilliant as it was in many respects, the situation of the French Emperor was full of peril; and though Russia was exposed to the greater hazard in the outset, it might be doubted whether France might not be exposed to the most formidable peril in the end.

57. Alexander's half promise of the throne of France to Bernadotte.

It does not belong to this biography to give any account of the Russian campaign, great and interesting as its events were, as neither Lord Castlereagh nor Sir Charles Stewart were personally brought in contact with them. But there is one circumstance in the course of it which has recently

been brought to light, which was so intimately connected with the subsequent career of both, that it calls for especial notice. After the retreat of the Russians from the intrenched camp at Drissa, where it had been originally intended to have made a stand, the Emperor retired to Moscow, to electrify the nobles by his presence and hasten the armaments preparing there, and thence he went to St Petersburg, and from it to Abo, at the head of the Gulf of Finland, where he had arranged a meeting with the Crown Prince of Sweden to concert their joint operations against the French Emperor. Lord Cathcart, the accredited ambassador of Great Britain at the Russian Court, was present at the meeting, while Sir Robert Wilson, the gallant military commissioner of that power, was cognisant of all the proceedings. Matters of the very highest importance were there brought under discussion. Alexander let drop hints which indicated an intention, if the events of the war proved favourable, of declaring the throne of France vacant, *and bestowing it on Bernadotte.* When the Crown Prince asked, after the Emperor had announced his intention of declaring the throne of France vacant, "To whom, then, would it be given?" he replied, with pointed emphasis, and bowing towards Bernadotte, "AU PLUS DIGNE."[1] These three words determined the entire future policy of the Crown Prince. They filled him with the hope of ascending the throne of France, and caused him to shape his course so as to compass the double objects of overthrowing Napoleon, and yet keep himself so much out of view on the overturn as not to embitter the feelings of the French people towards him. In the pursuit of this double object he more than once brought the common cause into the utmost jeopardy, and all but made shipwreck of the coalition, and the cause of European freedom. He unquestionably, as will appear in the sequel, would have done so, had it not been for the resolution and moral courage of two men—and those men were Sir Charles Stewart and Lord Castlereagh.

[1] Wilson's Russian Campaign of 1812, 113.

CHAPTER VIII.

FROM THE APPOINTMENT OF SIR CHARLES STEWART AS MINISTER AT THE COURT OF PRUSSIA, IN MARCH 1813, TO THE ARMISTICE OF PLESWITZ, IN JUNE FOLLOWING.

CHAP. VIII.

1813.

1. Opening of the year 1813, and aspect of Germany.

MEMORABLE beyond any other that ever occurred in the history of mankind, the year 1813 opened with prospects very different from those which signalised its termination. The close of the preceding year, indeed, had witnessed the flight from Russia of the remnant of the greatest host which had ever been arrayed against the liberties of nations, and all Germany resounded with the awful catastrophe, the punishment of improvidence and ambition, which had cut off or reduced to captivity nearly five hundred thousand of the best and bravest troops in Christendom. But in that terrible struggle the victors had suffered nearly if not quite as much as the vanquished; and the exhaustion of a campaign of unexampled extent and activity was felt even more severely by the former than the latter, owing to the great inferiority of force with which they commenced and carried on the struggle. Although the triumph of Russia had been great, and the shock to Napoleon immense, the victorious power was little qualified to take an important part in the prosecution of the war; and if the world gazed with wonder on forty thousand French in rags and misery, of whom only fifteen thousand had been at Moscow, who alone recrossed the Niemen after the disastrous campaign, the secret could not long be concealed that the Russians, who followed

them in an equal state of destitution and exhaustion, did not exceed thirty-five thousand.

2. Situation of Germany, and treaties with Prussia at this period by Great Britain.

Yielding rather to the loudly-proclaimed voice of his army and his country, and irresolute and undecided to the very last, the King of Prussia had at length taken the decided step. By a treaty signed at Kalish on the 28th February, between the Emperor of Russia and the King of Prussia, it had been provided that, to carry on the war with vigour against Napoleon, an alliance, offensive and defensive, should be established between the two powers, the former of which was to bring 150,000 men into the field, the latter 80,000, independent of the garrisons of the strong places. The convention was to be kept secret for two months in order to give Prussia time to arm in her defence; but, in the mean time, it was to be privately communicated to England, Austria, and Sweden; and the Emperor of Russia engaged never to lay down his arms till Prussia was reinstated in such a position in all respects as it was before the year 1806. This was soon after followed by a convention intended to effect the deliverance of Germany from the thraldom of French ambition, which declared the dissolution of the Confederation of the Rhine, and organised all the lesser German states, with the exception of Hanover, in five sections, each with a military governor at its head, to prepare the means of defence against the common enemy. These were the diplomatic acts of the sovereigns; but the enthusiasm of the people, especially in Prussia, far outstripped their comparatively cautious proceedings, and it was soon evident that, if arms and ammunition could only be supplied in sufficient quantities, the whole male population of the monarchy, capable of bearing arms, might soon be arrayed in defence of their country.[1]

Feb. 28.

March 23.

[1] Martens, xii. 564, and Sup. iii. 234; Thiers, xv. 328, 332.

While these great changes were going forward in Northern Europe, and during the greater part of the eventful year 1812, Sir Charles Stewart remained in London, or its vicinity; but he was no idle or unconcerned spectator of

CHAP. VIII.

1812.

3. Sir Charles Stewart's important services with the Government.

events. On the contrary, he never served the common cause more efficiently than he did during this eventful period. His brother Lord Castlereagh, then Minister for Foreign Affairs, though second to none in zeal and ability for promoting it, so far as diplomatic or administrative measures were concerned, was in a great degree destitute of the acquaintance with military affairs which practical experience alone can give; and he had, in consequence, not as yet fully appreciated the importance, or probabilities of success, of the novel mode of combating the hitherto invincible military forces of France which Lord Wellington had adopted. The other members of the Cabinet were still more desponding; and it was with no small difficulty, as already shown, that the British chief had persuaded them to continue the contest during Massena's invasion. Even after the signal and momentous defeat of that inroad, it was no easy matter to get the Government to continue the struggle, at least on such a scale as to afford any chance of important success. In these circumstances, it is difficult to over-estimate the importance of a military counsellor and friend, such as Sir Charles Stewart, being constantly with Lord Castlereagh, communicating to him the views of his chief, and explaining the grounds on which his well-founded hopes of ultimate success were founded. It was very much in consequence of these important communications, which were gladly communicated by Lord Castlereagh to the Cabinet, that the efforts of Britain in the Peninsula, instead of being relaxed during the crisis of 1812, were augmented; that the British army in the field, exclusive of Portuguese, was raised to 40,000 men, Badajos taken, Salamanca won, Madrid delivered, and a foundation laid in the liberation of the south of Spain for the entire deliverance of the Peninsula in the succeeding year.

To take proper advantage of the extraordinary burst of popular feeling in Prussia, and aid in directing the efforts of the inhabitants in the most efficacious way for the objects

of the alliance, it was indispensable that an accredited minister should be immediately despatched to Berlin, to take such measures, and make such reports, as might turn the resources of the two countries to the best account in defence against the common enemy. To effect this object a very peculiar combination of qualities was required. The minister should be one in the confidence, and possessed of the secret views of the British Government in its relations with all the Continental powers; who was intimate with the military system of Lord Wellington, and could both communicate to their generals the principles of warfare which in his hands had proved so successful, and form a channel of communication between them and that renowned commander. He required also to be one whose high-bred manners, varied accomplishments, and former history, were likely to render him acceptable to the northern sovereigns. By a singular train of circumstances this rare combination, at the very time it was required, was found in the brother of the existing Foreign Minister of Great Britain.

4. Requirements of a diplomatic envoy to the Court of Prussia.

Sir Charles Stewart, having served early in life with the German armies in Flanders and on the Rhine, was acquainted with their modes of warfare, and personally known to many of their generals; having acted at the head of the staff during four eventful campaigns with Lord Wellington, and enjoyed in the highest degree his confidence, he was of all men the best qualified to communicate to others the system of warfare which in his hands had, for the first time, proved a barrier to the ambition of revolutionary France; and, attached not less by the ties of blood than by the most tender and endearing friendship to his brother Lord Castlereagh, he had become the depository of his inmost views and ideas in regard to the war with that aspiring power. His manners, too, at once eminently courteous and high-bred, his person and countenance singularly fine and handsome, were such as to secure for him as ready a reception in the palaces of sove-

5. Sir Charles Stewart combined all the requisites.

CHAP. VIII. 1813.

reigns, as his military experience and talents did in the councils of generals. So obviously did these circumstances point out Sir Charles Stewart as the proper person to be the Minister at the Court and headquarters of the King of Prussia, that when the appointment was bestowed upon him it was universally felt to be no more than his due, and that, on this occasion at least, the office had descended upon the man as the most deserving, not the man been elevated to the office as the most favoured.*

6. Situation of the French and Allied armies at this period.

At the period when Sir Charles Stewart entered on his important mission, destined to involve him in such eventful duties, to open to him a career of so much glory, the situation of the French and Allied armies in the north of Europe was as follows: The wreck of Napoleon's Grand Army, not exceeding 40,000 combatants, of whom one-half had never seen the Kremlin, but had been picked up in the course of the retreat, had in the last stage of destitution and misery crossed the Niemen and Vistula, and taken up their cantonments on the left bank of the latter river—having their right at Warsaw, their centre at Thorn, and their left on the Baltic, at Dantzic. Some Russian troops in pursuit had already entered the Prussian terri-

* Sir Charles Stewart's letter of appointment was in these terms:—

"FOREIGN OFFICE, *April* 9, 1813.

"The successful progress of the Allied armies in the north of Germany has determined the Prince Regent to intrust an officer of suitable rank with the superintendence of his military interests in that quarter, and his Royal Highness has been graciously pleased to select you for this important service.

"It is his Royal Highness's pleasure that you should consider yourself specially charged with the military superintendence, so far as Great Britain is concerned, of the Prussian and Swedish armies; and with the correspondence which relates to the supply and operations of these armies, including the auxiliary corps which may act under the orders of the Prince Royal of Sweden. In order to give greater weight to your representations, his Royal Highness has been pleased to accredit you to his Prussian Majesty, to whose headquarters you will in the first instance proceed, for the purposes of presenting your credentials, and of discussing, in concert with Lord Cathcart, ambassador to the Emperor of Russia, the plan of operations to be executed by the respective armies. Whilst his Majesty's ambassador to the Court of Russia shall continue with the armies, it is his Royal Highness's pleasure that the British mission to the Court of Berlin and Stockholm should correspond with his Lordship as well as with this office. CASTLEREAGH."

—*MS. Londonderry Papers.*

tory, and Wittgenstein's advance-guard was in possession of Königsberg. The Emperor Alexander had joined the Grand Russian Army, now not numbering more than 35,000 combatants, so dreadfully had its ranks been reduced by the fatigues and sufferings of the winter march and campaign. Crossing the Vistula at Plock, to avoid Warsaw, which was still in the hands of the enemy, he advanced to, and established his headquarters at, Kalisch. The headquarters of Murat, whom Napoleon had left in charge of the Grand Army, were at Posen; but he soon resigned the command and retired to Naples, and Eugene Beauharnais succeeded him in that arduous task. The latter immediately appointed General Rapp governor of Dantzic, with a garrison of 28,000 men, composed of the stragglers and broken remains of a hundred regiments, but whom his vigour and resolution soon succeeded in reorganising in a tolerably efficient form. Four other fortresses in Poland—Thorn, Modlin, Zamosc, and Czenstochau—were also garrisoned and put in as good a state of defence as possible, and the same was done with the fortresses in the rear, on the Oder—viz., Stettin, Custrin, Glogau, and Spandau; but the garrisons of these strongholds consisted for the most part of invalids, or those slightly wounded. Schwartzenberg with his Austrians was in cantonments on the right bank of the Pilica covering Galicia, and Reynier with his Saxons had just retired from Kalisch on the approach of the Emperor Alexander. Eugene, with the remnant of the Grand Army, at first flattered himself he should be able to maintain the line of the Oder; but on the approach of the Russians he became sensible that this was impossible, and, abandoning it to the feeble garrisons thrown into its fortresses, withdrew with all his forces in the field behind the Elbe.[1]

[1] Cathcart's War in Germany, 111-114; Thiers, xv. 328-340.

Previous to this the Prussians had revolted from the French connection, and joined their forces to those of the Russians, and Lord Walpole had been sent by Lord

CHAP. VIII.

1813.

Castlereagh on a secret mission to Vienna, to endeavour to discover the views of Austria on the present state of public affairs and the side it was disposed to take in the contest for European freedom. With such address was the mission managed that his Lordship was a considerable time in the suburbs of that capital in communication with Prince Metternich before his presence came to the ears of Count Otto, the French minister at the Court of Vienna. The moment he heard of it he remonstrated with Metternich and insisted on his removal, and the English envoy was obliged to withdraw. Before he did so, however, he had become possessed of the secret views of the Austrian Cabinet, which were by no means to venture upon the hazardous step of an immediate war with France, for which neither the finances nor the military preparations of the empire were then equal; but to prepare in the meanwhile for all eventualities, so as to be able to interpose with decisive effect in a future stage of the conflict, and impose the acceptance of reasonable conditions on the French Emperor. Lord Walpole on leaving Vienna repaired to Kalisch, where he met Lord Cathcart, who had hastened from St Petersburg to the headquarters of the Russian Emperor, and who ably and worthily represented Great Britain at the court of that great sovereign, from whence he soon after proceeded to London to communicate to the British Government the important information he had obtained in regard to the secret views of both Imperial Cabinets.[1]

7. Lord Walpole's secret mission to Vienna, and views of Austria at this period.

March 2.

[1] Cathcart, 113, 114.

8. Sir Charles Stewart lands in Prussia; feelings of the people.

Sir Charles Stewart embarked on his mission as accredited minister to the King of Prussia from Yarmouth, on April 13, 1813. The vessel soon reached Cuxhaven, and ran up the Elbe with great rapidity amidst the enthusiastic cheers of the people, who crowded to the water's edge on every pier or projecting point to hail the representative of England—the power to which all eyes were invariably turned whenever resistance to France was in contemplation. On the 19th he landed at Hamburg.

Everywhere the cry was for arms. Resolute to shake off the yoke of the French, the people were universally enrolling themselves in volunteer corps or in the ranks of the regular army, or landwehr; but there was a sad deficiency of arms to take advantage of this patriotic and warlike enthusiasm. Such was the demand for military weapons and accoutrements, that all the munificent prodigality of England, which was poured forth with unexampled profusion, was unable to keep pace with it. For the great and indispensable work of meeting these universal and pressing requisitions, the administrative powers of Sir Charles Stewart found an ample field for exertion; and by his indefatigable efforts, joined to those of Lord Castlereagh at home, the wants of the population were supplied with a rapidity which could hardly have been anticipated. To these efforts, by which the universal arming and equipment of the Prussians, both in the lost and the present provinces of the monarchy, was so quickly effected, much of the subsequent success of the campaign is to be ascribed.[1]

[1] Londonderry's War in Germany, 2-4.

9. Schwartzenberg's mission to Paris.

While these things were passing in the north of Germany, Prince Schwartzenberg was at Paris, intrusted by the Emperor Francis with a most important mission to the Court of Napoleon. For this task he had been removed from the command of the army which had acted against the Russians in the preceding campaign; and as he had been an intimate friend of the Emperor of Austria, and the principal party who had been intrusted with the negotiations relative to the marriage of the Archduchess Marie Louise, it was thought he was the best person to convey to the Empress Regent the views of her father in regard to the pacification of Europe. Schwartzenberg arrived before the Emperor had set out to return to the army; but he had never succeeded in obtaining a private audience of any length with him, so justly had he anticipated the object of his mission, and so determined was he to resist it. After his departure to resume the

CHAP. VIII. 1813.

command of the army on the Elbe, the Austrian Prince succeeded in obtaining several private interviews of the Empress. But he entirely failed in the object of his mission. He found the Empress strongly impressed with the power of Napoleon, and with unbounded confidence in his star, but as thoroughly convinced that she herself would run extreme risk, if a rupture were to break out between France and Austria. To all the representations which the Austrian ambassador could make in regard to the danger which Napoleon ran by continuing the contest, the only reply which he could obtain was, that the power of the Emperor was immense, and that she had the fullest confidence in his genius; that she did not understand war or anything regarding it; and that all she entreated was that, having been sent there as a pledge of peace, she should not be exposed to the horrors of revolutionary hostility.[1]

[1] Thiers, xv. 388-397.

10. Conference of Maret and Schwartzenberg.

Foiled in his endeavours to make an impression on the Imperial Cabinet through this channel, Schwartzenberg next attempted to attain the same object through the Duke de Bassano (Maret), with whom he had been on terms of such intimacy during the negotiations which preceded the marriage, that he was enabled to approach him at once in the most confidential manner. To this experienced diplomatist he opened himself in several secret conferences in the most unreserved manner, enlarging on the immensity of the losses which the Emperor had sustained in the Moscow campaign, the inexperience of the young troops in course of formation to replace those which had been lost, the profound feelings of hostility by which Germany was agitated, and the impossibility of avoiding the greatest disasters but by such timely concessions as might enable Austria to throw her weight into the balance in favour of France, by openly contending along with her for a just and equitable pacification. To all these considerations M. de Bassano turned a deaf ear, alleging the marriage which had united the two imperial crowns as

a sufficient security for the fidelity of Austria to its engagements under any circumstances which could possibly occur. "The marriage!" exclaimed Schwartzenberg, for a moment losing patience; "policy has made it, —policy may unmake it." These words revealed to the experienced diplomatist the *pensée intime* of Austria, and the depth of the abyss upon the edge of which Napoleon stood. But knowing that the mind of the latter was made up, and that he was resolved to stand the chance of a contest rather than make any concession, he deemed it better not to communicate them to his master, and Schwartzenberg returned to Vienna in despair at the determination of the French Emperor, and without having accomplished any of the objects for which he had been sent to Paris.

II. Aspect of affairs at Vienna.

While everything was conspiring to produce a hostile result in the French capital, affairs at Vienna did not by any means wear a more pacific aspect. M. de Narbonne, the French ambassador, in vain contended there against the settled determination of the Emperor and Prince Metternich, and the loudly expressed opinions and feelings of all ranks of the people. But there were many reasons which inclined the Emperor and his able Minister to adopt a more cautious and moderate policy. The military establishment of Austria was still on a very reduced scale, and the finances of the empire were in still greater embarrassment. The Emperor was deeply interested by the marriage which had united the two imperial houses in the preservation of the empire of France, and it would have been the cause of the greatest regret to him to see his grandson deprived by the folly of his father of the first crown in Christendom. For these reasons, despite the ancient rivalry of France and Austria, and the deep wounds which had been inflicted on the latter power by the former since the Revolution broke out, the Imperial Cabinet had no wish to precipitate hostilities, or even engage in them at all, if the bless-

CHAP. VIII. 1813.

ing of an equitable pacification, such as was likely to prove durable, could be attained in any other way. Their object was, by appearing on the field in the character of armed mediators, and with the understanding rather than the threat that they would join their arms to the power which accepted the terms for which they contended, and act against the one which refused to accede to such an arrangement as might in some degree restore the balance of power in Central Europe, to induce the Emperor of France to accept such reasonable conditions as might eradicate the germ of future and desolating hostilities, invariably consequent on the undue preponderance of any one great military power. On these terms they were desirous to keep Napoleon on the throne of France, and secure to him a greater dominion than Louis XIV. had ever enjoyed.[1]

[1] Thiers, xv. 399, 400.

12. Secret negotiation between Austria and the King of Saxony.

When Austria, Russia, and Prussia were making such efforts, some by military preparations, some by diplomatic movements, to effect the deliverance of Germany, it was scarcely possible, and, were it possible, would not have been creditable, that the lesser states of Germany itself should remain strangers to the movement. The Cabinets of Dresden and Munich, however, were by no means disinclined to entertain the proposals communicated to them in secret by the Cabinet of Vienna. These proposals were, that Saxony was to renounce the throne of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, which was of no real value to it, and afforded a constant cause of embroilment with Russia, and to provide an indemnity for it in some other possessions nearer home. Metternich was also very desirous to obtain the removal or direction of the Saxon corps forming part of the army of Prince Schwartzenberg. The military force of Saxony, though not large, was by no means to be despised, especially in the equal balance of the contending powers in the contest which was approaching. To favour the secret negotiations between Austria and Saxony which had been commenced, and deliver Austria from all uneasiness in

that quarter, an armistice was concluded between the Russians under Sacken and the Austrian general, and then a secret convention, in virtue of which the Austrians were to retire into Galicia, whither they were not to be followed by the Russians, and the Polish corps of Poniatowski was to be transported across the Austrian states to Dresden, there to be at the disposal of the Emperor Napoleon.[1]

[1] Thiers, xv. 403-405.

13. Secret negotiation with Bavaria.

With Bavaria the Cabinet of Vienna had also opened secret negotiations; but it was not so easy to arrange matters with that power, for Austria had nothing to offer her in exchange for the rounding of the Austrian frontiers on the Inn, and the probable cession of the Tyrol, which was the object the Imperial Cabinet had most at heart. Notwithstanding this, the current of German feeling rose so strong in Bavaria, as in Saxony, that the Government was in a manner forced to lend an ear to these secret proposals. They led to no result at the moment, however, because the preparations of Austria were as yet so incomplete, and her inclination to pacific mediation so decided, that she neither could nor would at that period draw the sword, and of course the lesser powers, whose dominions were filled with French troops, could not declare themselves till the Cabinet of Vienna had done so. The King of Saxony, however, solemnly engaged to join the Confederacy as soon as Austria did so; and, in the mean time, to withdraw his forces from French control, and in some degree regain his freedom of action, he retired to Prague, in the Austrian territories, but without any overt act of hostility against the French Emperor.[2] *

[2] MS. Lond. Papers; Cathcart, 122; Thiers, xv. 405, 406.

* Lord Castlereagh's views at this juncture are well explained in the following despatch to Lord Cathcart, the ambassador at the Court of Russia:—"The great object on the present occasion is to induce the Emperor of Russia to give confidence to all the Germanic powers, who are by any means capable of being detached from Buonaparte, and I have no doubt his Imperial Majesty would himself be disposed to take that line; but if those whom he employs are not hearty, or not believed to be sincere in that policy, the views of the monarch will be lost in the distrust of his agents. . . . The general principle of giving confidence to all powers which can be induced to take a part in reducing

CHAP. VIII.

1813.

14. Napoleon's proposals to Austria.

It was in the midst of these complicated and important negotiations that M. de Narbonne, the French ambassador, arrived at Vienna with Napoleon's final proposal to Austria. Unfortunately, the terms which M. de Narbonne came authorised to propose, so far from being in the remotest degree favourable to the independence of Germany, were diametrically the reverse. They amounted in substance to this: that Prussia should be entirely destroyed, and partitioned between Saxony, which was to receive the greater portion, and Austria, which was to be indemnified for all its losses, and the permanent cession of the Tyrol to Bavaria, by the restoration of the whole of Silesia, and the acquisition of a considerable portion of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw.[1]

[1] Sir Chas. Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, May 1, 1813, MS.; Thiers, xv. 358,406.

15. Secret conferences of M. de Narbonne with Metternich.

How tempting soever these offers might be to the Austrian Cabinet, they had moderation and good sense enough to elude accepting them. Metternich turned all his efforts to extracting from M. de Narbonne more in detail the specific terms which Napoleon was inclined to propose or accept. With this view, after enumerating the immense losses which the French had sustained in the Moscow campaign, and describing the universal feeling in Germany, which was to take advantage of the crisis to effect the

the power of France, and restoring the independence of Germany, which I have above adverted to, is what I can alone recommend as an answer to all the suppositions you suggest in your private letter of the 24th November.

"It seems utterly impossible at the present moment to prescribe to you any precise scheme, or even to express our particular wishes. Whatever scheme of policy can most immediately combine the greatest number of powers and the greatest military force against France, so as to produce the utmost effect against her, before she can recruit her armies and recover her ascendancy, is that which we must naturally desire most to promote. And I should therefore wish that you would not discourage any Russian plans which you think calculated to produce this effect, from any supposition that we may be entangled in any political schemes of our own. Our great object is to take the north of Europe out of the hands of Buonaparte; and whatever plan can be devised for insuring success in this main point will not meet with opposition here, because it is not of our suggestion, or does not quite fall in with all our private views. . . . . The letter you enclosed from Vienna supposed that Court precluded from following her wishes by engagements into which she had been reluctantly forced; but I still think there must be means sufficient to remove those scruples if well applied."—LORD CASTLEREAGH *to* LORD CATHCART, *January* 15, 1813; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, viii. 303-305.

entire liberation of the country from French domination, he went on to add that he himself was far from being swept away with the torrent, that he was well aware of the immense resources which still remained to the French Emperor, and that he had no inclination to revive the hostile policy from which the monarchy had already suffered so much. Still, continued he, we must not shut our eyes to self-evident truths. Austria, though powerful, is not omnipotent; and if she is to attempt modifying the passions which are now so powerfully moving the whole of Germany, she must be able to show that she is acting with a view to obtaining peace on such moderate and equitable terms as may convince the majority of the German people of the expedience of supporting them.[1]

[1] Thiers, xv. 409.

16. Continued.

Descending then to more specific proposals, the Austrian minister enforced the impossibility of maintaining any longer the chimera of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, irretrievably condemned by the campaign of 1812; and descanted on the necessity of reconstituting the second-rate powers, and especially Prussia, the only real substitute for Poland, for ever destroyed, on an enlarged scale; on the impossibility of continuing the Confederation of the Rhine—an institution decidedly adverse to the spirit of the country, and more burdensome than useful to Napoleon; on the difficulty of bringing the belligerent powers to consent to the annexation of Hamburg, Lubeck, Bremen, and the other Hanse towns, to the French dominion. "We shall have difficulty enough," added Metternich, "to prevent them from speaking of Holland, Spain, Italy. England will probably insist upon them; and if she should yield on Holland and Italy, assuredly she will not do so on Spain. But let us not complicate affairs by considering what she may demand: if it should become necessary, we shall put England aside, and treat without her. We may even succeed in detaching Russia from Prussia if we present to them acceptable terms, and in that event France will find us again faithful

CHAP. VIII. 1813.

allies. But for Heaven's sake explain yourselves. Make known to us your wishes, and afford us the means of remaining your allies by giving us a reasonable cause to defend—a cause we need not be ashamed to proclaim to our people."[1]

[1] Thiers, xv. 409, 410.

17. Conclusion of this conference.

To all these proposals M. de Narbonne, who as yet was without definitive instructions, and who was sent rather to feel his way as to the designs of Austria than reveal those of France, replied only by renewing his assurances as to the boundless resources of France, and the necessity of yielding much to the iron will of the Emperor. Meanwhile, however, he had divined the secret views of the Austrian diplomatist, which were, to make the transition from the state of an ally to that of an armed mediator; and, in the interim, to arm with all possible rapidity, in order to be able to assume the latter character with dignity and effect. The views of Metternich were not at bottom much at variance with those of M. de Narbonne, who was profoundly convinced of the impossibility of upholding in its full extent the French domination in Germany; and if the matter had been left to them alone, it would probably have been brought to an accommodation. But unfortunately a third party soon intervened on the scene whom it was not so easy a matter to coerce. On

April 9.

the 9th April, the final instructions of Napoleon arrived, which had been despatched from Paris on the 29th March. These enjoined the French ambassador to insist that, as the Cabinet of Vienna desired peace, they should forthwith take the only steps which could secure it, and these were, *to assume at once the principal place in the contest, and prepare to support it by the preparation of adequate forces.* With this view she was required to be prepared to throw 100,000 men on the flank of the belligerent parties on the frontiers of Silesia; and if the Allies would not agree to the terms proposed, to invade that province, and *keep it for herself*, while she left to Napoleon the task of driving the Russians, Prussians,

Swedes, and English beyond the Vistula. So peremptory were the instructions of the Emperor, that M. de Narbonne felt he would best discharge his duty by reading them without commentary to the Austrian diplomatist, which he accordingly did.[1]

[1] Thiers, xv. 413, 414.

18. Answer of Metternich to Napoleon's proposals to Austria.

Metternich, in answer, asked, What proposals of peace did the French Emperor intend to tender to the Allied powers if they agreed to suspend hostilities? To this question M. de Narbonne had no reply to make; for Napoleon, according to his uniform system, preserved a studious silence upon that point in order to be in a situation to take advantage of any eventualities which might arise in his favour. As Narbonne could not give any specific information on this material subject, Metternich asked for two days to consider the grave and important communication which had been made to him. At the close of that time he assured the French ambassador, with the most sincere air and friendly manner, that the Austrian Cabinet entirely concurred with the French Emperor in thinking that Austria could never, in the circumstances, assume a secondary position, or limit her action to what had taken place in 1812. "Austria," said he, "has foreseen this, and prepared for it. That is the cause of the extensive armaments which have been made, and which, independent of the troops returned from Poland, and of the corps of observation in Galicia, will soon provide for her a hundred thousand men in Bohemia. Austria has no views at variance with those of the Emperor Napoleon, as to the manner in which she should present herself to the belligerent powers. She will propose to the powers to halt, to conclude an armistice, and to name plenipotentiaries. If they agree to this, then will be the time to propose terms of peace; and on that subject she impatiently awaits the further communications promised by the French Government. If, on the contrary, they should refuse to entertain any proposals of peace, then will be the time to act, and

CHAP. VIII. 1813.

to determine on the mode of employing the forces of Austria conjointly with those of France. This state of things evidently demonstrates *the insufficiency of the present treaty of alliance*, and the necessity of modifying it according to the change of circumstances. It is plain, therefore, that it is necessary to give a new direction to the Austrian auxiliary force on the frontiers of Poland, and bring it, along with the Polish corps in whose company it has been, into the Austrian territory, in order to prevent its being employed contrary to the views of the two powers. I am perfectly satisfied with the explanations now given, and hasten to say how much satisfaction it gives me to be entirely in unison with the French Cabinet, and with how much pleasure I would revert to our former position of allies rather than the recent one of mediator, which has in a manner been forced upon us."[1]

[1] Thiers, xv. 416, 417.

19. Positions of the French and Allied armies at this period, when Sir Chas. Stewart joined the Allied headquarters.

Such was the situation of diplomatic affairs, which eventually became of such moment in this war, at the time when Sir Charles Stewart joined the headquarters of the Emperor of Russia and the King of Prussia, which he did at Dresden on the 26th April. Napoleon was still at Mayence, engaged with almost superhuman activity in urging forward, organising, and providing for the wants of the immense army of recruits which he had succeeded in raising and equipping since his return from Moscow, to supply the losses of that terrible campaign. The cavalry, in particular, which had lost nearly all its horses during the Moscow retreat, was the object of his particular attention; and every horseman of the Guard, in addition to the steed on which he himself was mounted, had two led horses with him, to remount the cavaliers of the Guard who were awaiting them dismounted behind the Saale. The genius and spirit of the French nation seconded the efforts of the Emperor to a wish, and indeed they never could have met with the success which actually attended them,[2] if they had not been seconded

[2] Marmont, v. 7-10; Thiers, xv. 438-441.

by the unanimous wishes and efforts of all classes of the people.

Napoleon calculated upon being able to bring up 150,000 men from the Rhine to the Saale, behind which river Eugene had collected 40,000 men, the poor remains of the immense host which had been engaged in the Russian war. Forty thousand had already joined him under Lauriston in March; and he reckoned on as many more coming up from Italy. Now, after making all allowance for the ineffectives, he hoped to be able to debouch from the Thuringian Forest with 200,000 men. This was a much larger force than the Allies could by possibility oppose to them, for the largest calculations made the united force of the Russians and Prussians not to exceed 130,000 men. The army was thus distributed: Ney commanded one corps of five divisions, 48,000 strong, the headquarters of which were at Wurzburg, but its advanced-guard occupied Erfurth;* Marmont commanded another of four divisions, 27,000 in number, which was farther in the rear, being organised at Hanau; Bessières was at Eisenach with six battalions of the Old, and sixteen of the Young Guard, which had been brought up from Spain only 15,000 sabres and bayonets; Bertrand was at Cobourg with his corps, consisting of three divisions, numbering 20,000, one of which was the Wurtemberg contingent; Oudinot, with his corps and a Bavarian division, 25,000 in all, was at Saalfeld; and Eugene, with the remains of the army of 1812, consisting of Victor's corps, which had never been beyond Smolensko, with the corps of Lauriston and Macdonald, was on the left bank of the Elbe, with his left at the junction of that river and the Saale, his centre at Bernberg, and his right stretching out to the Hartz Mountains. The united force of these corps under Eugene, after leaving 28,000

20. Forces of Napoleon.

* The numbers here given are those only actually present with the eagles. The numbers on paper were: Ney, 60,000; Marmont, 40,000; Guard, 40,000; Bertrand and Oudinot, 50,000; Eugene, 80,000; small German contingents 10,000—in all, 280,000.

CHAP. VIII. 1812.

men in Dantzic, and 32,000 in the fortresses on the Elbe and the Oder, amounted to 62,000. The entire forces of which Napoleon could dispose in the beginning of May amounted on paper to 280,000 men; but those effective and present with the eagles were only 200,000. In addition to this, there were three armies of reserve forming, one in Italy, one at Mayence, and one in Westphalia, but the nearest of them could not be on the theatre of war before the middle of June. Still there were, after making every deduction, 170,000 effective men who might be relied on for the first shock of war on the plains of Saxony, in the beginning of May; and this accordingly is the estimate alike of M. Thiers, Sir Charles Stewart, and Sir George Cathcart, who were on opposite sides, and had access to the best sources of information. The proportion of cavalry in these forces was very small, —much below what is usual; but the artillery, which amounted to 450 pieces, was in first-rate order; and the Guard and old troops in the army were inferior to none in the world in courage and discipline.[1] *

[1] Compare Thiers, xv. 440, 444, 447; Lond. 7; Cathcart, 119, 120.

* Sir Charles Stewart, soon after his arrival in Hamburg, which he reached on 19th April, wrote to Lord Castlereagh the following account of the position and strength of the contending armies:—

"DRESDEN, *26th April.*

"Buonaparte is supposed to have arrived at Erfurth (if not more advanced), and I learn the amount of French force assembled on this side the Rhine is rated at 160,000 men—far superior to the Allies in numbers, but infinitely inferior as to their composition, particularly from want of cavalry. So bad is the description of these new troops, that a French general was heard to say, 'Que ferons-nous avec ces cochons de lait?'

"The general position of the Allied army is along the Saale. General Blucher's corps on the left attends to the mountains which bound Saxony on the side of the Thuringian Forest. His headquarters are at Altenberg. Count Wittgenstein is in the centre, with General D'York on the right, about Dessau. To the northward is General Bulow's division, observing Magdeburg. Kutusoff's corps is some miles in front of this place (Dresden); and Milaradowitch forms his advance at Chemnitz. The reserves of the armies are here. Yesterday 15,000 infantry and 8000 cavalry defiled before the sovereign.

"The Prussian army amounts at present to about 60,000 or 70,000 men. It is raising to 130,000, besides militia. I doubt, from what I hear, that the Russian force now up comes as high as 60,000. The French extend from Cobourg, in the Thuringian Forest, by Meiningen and Eisenach to Halberstadt, where the vice-king's headquarters now are."

On the 27th April Sir Charles had an audience of the King of Prussia, and

21. Forces and positions of the Allies.

The forces which the Allies could accumulate to meet this enormous body of men were greatly inferior in point of numbers. The general position and force of the Allied armies when hostilities, after a short pause, were renewed, were as follow: — The King of Prussia had pushed forward all the regular troops which were disposable to Zwickau, in Saxony, but they did not exceed 25,000 men, under the command of General Blucher. They were in communication with a Russian corps, 15,000 strong, under Winzingerode, which lay between Merseburg and Altenburg, with parties extending to Weimar. The Russian general, Wittgenstein, had formed a junction with the Prussian corps of D'York; and their united force, 40,000 strong, had crossed the Elbe at Dessau, and was moving in the direction of Halle. General Bulow, with 10,000 men, was observing Magdeburg, in which there was a strong French garrison; and Tettenborn, with a light corps of 4000 foot and 3000 Cossacks, was at Celle, in the neighbourhood of Bremen. Thus the whole force of the Allies on the line of the Elbe was somewhat under 100,000; but they were so widely scattered, and had so long a line of country to defend, that it was certain that not more than 70,000 could be assembled at any one point for a general battle.[1]

[1] Lond. 5, 6; Cathcart, 117, 118; Thiers, xv. 453; Sir Chas. Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, April 28, 1813, MS.

22. Accession of Bernadotte to the Confederacy.

Besides these forces, however, the Allies reckoned on the support, on their extreme right, of a prince of wide celebrity, at the head of a powerful army, though much too far off to be of any service in the hostilities that were immediately to commence. This was Bernadotte, Prince Royal of Sweden, who, as already mentioned, had been gained to the Allied cause. It had been agreed that he was to make common cause with the Russians in the war against Napoleon; and it was owing to this convention that Baron Steingel, in the preceding campaign,

presented his credentials. Upon that occasion his Majesty expressed the very greatest satisfaction which this early demonstration of the sympathy and friendship of Great Britain afforded him.— *MS. Londonderry Papers.*

CHAP. VIII. 1813.

had been detached from Finland, and brought up to the Dwina to reinforce Wittgenstein. The amicable relations thus established had been since successfully improved by Lord Castlereagh on the part of Great Britain, who, through the able minister at Stockholm, Mr Thornton, arranged a convention by which the forces of Sweden were to be brought forward in an efficient way for the support of the common cause. By this convention, which

March 13.

was concluded at Oerebro on the 13th March, it was stipulated that Sweden was to bring 30,000 men into the field, which were to be reinforced by 20,000 Russians, and the whole were to act in Germany under the command of the Prince Royal. To defray the expense of this armament, England engaged to pay Sweden a subsidy of £1,000,000 a-year, by equal instalments monthly, and to cede Guadaloupe to her. The implied condition of this treaty was the annexation of Norway to Sweden; for though it was not expressly provided for, it was not obscurely alluded to in the clause of the treaty which provided that England "should not only oppose no obstacle to the perpetual annexation of Norway to Sweden, but should facilitate in that respect the views of the King of Sweden, not only by good offices, but by employing, if necessary, a naval co-operation in concert with the Swedish and Russian troops." Force, however, was not to be employed, unless the King of Denmark had previously declined to join the alliance. In virtue of this treaty 7000 Swedes had already arrived at Stralsund, and 10,000 more, under the Prince Royal in person, were shortly expected at the same place, to co-operate with Tettenborn and the Prussian and Hanoverian levies in the north of Germany, on the extreme right of the Allied line of operations.[1]*

[1] Martens, Sup. v. 231; Lond. 6, 7; Thiers, xv. 453, 454.

* Lord Castlereagh was well aware of the objections to the assignment of Norway to Sweden as the price of the latter power joining the Allies, but he vindicated it on its true ground, that of *absolute necessity*. On the 28th April he wrote to Lord Cathcart in the following terms:—"Neither Russia nor Great Britain (were it even politic) can now break with Sweden without a loss

Sir Charles Stewart's attention was in the first instance, after landing in Germany, directed to the formation and organisation of the Hanoverian levies. In proportion as the French, in the course of their retreat, withdrew from this country, the inhabitants spontaneously organised themselves in battalions to resist the common enemy. It was at first proposed to concentrate them on one point; but Sir Charles wisely advised that the rudiments, at least, of military discipline should be learned in the parishes where the recruits were obtained, both as less expensive, and as less likely to attract the notice of the enemy, and give him the means of striking a serious blow. His advice was immediately acted upon, and with the happiest effect. His next object was to ascertain from headquarters the real sentiments of Bernadotte, who was hourly expected at Stralsund, and with this view he sent Lieutenant-Colonel Cooke, an officer of zeal and ability, to the Prince Royal's headquarters. At the same time he directed the issue to the Hanoverian levies of 5000 stand of arms, in addition to those already furnished from the British supplies, which had an important effect in stimulating the ardour of that brave and loyal people.[1]

23. Sir Charles Stewart's first steps in Germany.

[1] Lond. 9, 10.

A circumstance occurred at this time not a little curious, as indicating the opposite principles on which the war was about to be carried on by the contending parties, and on which occasion Sir Charles Stewart loudly spoke out the sentiments of his Government. Thorn had lately capitulated, with its garrison of 3000

24. Offers to surrender Spandau for bribes.

of character; and the only object now is, to render the alliance useful to the common cause. We never have disguised from ourselves the embarrassments of the Norwegian point; but it was an engagement made in the day of adversity, for the preservation of Russia. That it has essentially contributed to save her, and, with Russia, the rest of Europe, cannot be doubted; and this must not be forgotten in the day of prosperity, either for our own convenience, or to conciliate the sentiments of powers that were then seeking their safety in the connection of France. We must have a clear case of good faith on the part of Russia, as well as on our own, or we cannot go to Parliament for subsidy."—LORD CASTLEREAGH *to* LORD CATHCART, *April* 28, 1813; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, viii. 382, 383.

CHAP. VIII. 1813.

men, to the Russian general, Langeron; and Spandau, in the neighbourhood of Berlin, was closely blockaded, and had made proposals of surrender to the Allies, which had been referred to Count Wittgenstein. The recovery of this stronghold was a great object to the inhabitants of the capital, as well from its close vicinity as because it was supposed to contain, on the information of the French themselves, an enormous quantity of plunder, which had been lodged in the place by Eugene Beauharnais, the viceroy of Italy, and which the Prussians were fearful he might, by capitulation, acquire the right to carry out of the country. Meanwhile intimation came in from various quarters that there was a more expeditious way of becoming master of the place than either siege or blockade, and that the commanders of this and some other fortresses would not be proof against adequate offers of money. The matter was communicated to Sir Charles Stewart, as the supplies for this as other services were, in the utter destitution of Prussia, looked for from England; but he at once declared "that any such measures on the part of Great Britain were wholly out of the question; that if the Allied armies could drive the French over the Rhine the fortresses would not long hold out; and that we had now but one object to look to, which was to annihilate Buonaparte by force of arms, and not by treachery or gold."[1]

[1] Sir Chas. Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, April 25, 1813, MS.; and Lond. 11.

25. State of affairs at Dresden on Sir Chas.'s arrival.

There can be no doubt that this answer was the one which befitted the representative of a great nation conducting war on honourable principles; and as such it received the cordial approbation of the British Government. But the expectations which Sir Charles had been led to form as to the speedy driving the French over the Rhine, from the sanguine expectations of Hamburg and Berlin, were soon dispelled. On arriving at the Allied headquarters at Dresden on the 26th April, he found matters in a very different and much less promising state. He was admitted to an audience with Baron Hardenberg on

the following morning, and nothing could be more flattering or gratifying than his reception by that distinguished minister, or encouraging than the assurances which he gave him as to the determination of both sovereigns to carry on the war with unanimity and vigour till the great object of effecting the deliverance of Germany was effected. Prussia was now implicated beyond the possibility of change in the grand scheme of hostility against France; unless the armies of the latter were driven across the Rhine, nothing but partition and ruin could be anticipated by its sovereign or inhabitants. But the immediate prospect of effecting the removal of these calamities was far from being satisfactory. Near Stettin a slight reverse had been sustained; and a letter had been intercepted from Eugene to Marshal Ney, which disclosed a plan of attacking Blucher, who was now at Altenburg, so far in advance as to be unsupported. The united force of the two French generals was 50,000 men; and others to a greater amount were pressing through the Thuringian Forest. In a word, it was evident that Napoleon's force was much greater than had been supposed; and that, so far from meditating a retreat across the Rhine, he was contemplating a triumphant march to the Oder and the Vistula. In these circumstances, it was with no small joy that the Allied sovereigns learned from Sir Charles Stewart that Great Britain was prepared to furnish the sinews of war in the most liberal manner; and that, in addition to the £2,000,000 stipulated by the treaty of alliance to be given to Russia and Prussia, she was to give £500,000 for the charge of the Russian fleet placed in deposit in the British harbours, and £2,000,000 more to sustain the military operations of the Prince Royal of Sweden in the north of Germany.[1]

[1] Sir Chas. Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, April 28, 1813, MS.; Lond. 11-13.

These gratifying assurances insured for Sir Charles Stewart the most flattering reception from the King of Prussia, at an audience with which he was honoured on the following day, when he presented his credentials. On

CHAP. VIII.

1813.

§ 26. Interview of Sir Charles Stewart with the King of Prussia. April 27.

this occasion his Majesty dwelt with earnestness on the immense efforts which Prussia had already made, and was preparing to make, for the prosecution of the war, adding, that the forces which she as yet had on foot were not a half of those which she was prepared ultimately to bring into the field. The following morning brought the agreeable intelligence of the fall of Spandau—a success of no small importance, both as letting loose the blockading force and quieting the apprehensions of the inhabitants of Berlin. But grave events were on the wing; and intelligence arrived on the same day which rendered an immediate concentration of the Allied forces necessary, and gave unmistakable tokens of a great battle approaching. An officer arrived from Sir Robert Wilson, who was with the advance at Chemnitz, announcing that the enemy, in great strength, were moving upon the Allied left, and that their advanced-guard had reached Jena, while the Emperor himself was at Erfurth.* It was known that the entire force of the enemy was 170,000, while the Allies could not, at the very utmost, collect more than 80,000 at any one point; while the French force, being all drawn from Mayence and the Rhine, was comparatively concentrated in one line of advance.[1] But notwithstanding this great disparity of force, no fears were entertained, either at the Allied headquarters or in

[1] Sir Chas. Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, April 28, 1813, MS.; Lond. 13-15; Cathcart, 119-122.

* "An officer is just arrived from Wilson at Chemnitz. The enemy are moving on our left: their advance has reached Jena. In consequence of their approach, the Allied army are more closely concentrating on the Saale between Merseburg on the right and Altenburg on the left. Wittgenstein has removed from Dessau to the former place. Milaradowitch is thrown forward towards Plauen to strengthen the left; and the movements are indicative of a serious event, of which, from the enthusiasm prevailing, there can be no doubt, although, as you will see by Buonaparte's document, he reckons his forces at 200,000 men, and he states himself 170,000 collected here. I hope the Allies will force him to fight in the plain; but the misfortune is, the country near the Thuringian Forest is exactly what will enable him, if he is beat, to get off well without being annihilated by the Cossack cavalry; and having his fortresses on the Rhine, he does not risk so much as the Allies in a battle, who, if worsted, would have difficulty, with only one good bridge here over the Elbe, and Magdeburg, &c., in the hands of the enemy. However, there is nothing to fear."—SIR CHARLES STEWART *to* LORD CASTLEREAGH, *April* 29, 1813; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, viii. 387, 388.

their armies, of the result; for not only was their self-confidence at the very highest point, from the successes of the preceding campaign, but they were aware that more than half the French army was composed of raw young conscripts, little calculated either to brave the fatigues of long marches and wet bivouacs, or to withstand in regular battle the veterans of the Moscow campaign.

27. Death of Kutusoff, and forward movement of the Allies towards Leipsic.

Old Marshal Kutusoff had been taken ill, and died in his progress through Silesia; but the loss of this veteran abated nothing of the confidence of the Allies. After much deliberation, the command-in-chief was bestowed on Count Wittgenstein, whose successful campaign on the Dwina, and great services at the passage of the Beresina, had procured for him a high military reputation. As the Emperor of Russia and King of Prussia, however, were at headquarters, his command was little more than nominal, and he stood in the unpleasant predicament of bearing the responsibility of operations of which he had by no means the uncontrolled direction. He was, though by no means a consummate general, of a daring intrepid disposition; and he readily went into the project, then the favourite one at headquarters, to advance before the enemy had recovered the consternation produced by the catastrophe of the last campaign, and give them battle, however superior they might be in number, with whatever forces could be assembled for the purpose. Though this was the general opinion, however, and the one which was immediately acted upon, yet there were not wanting others, among whom was Sir Charles Stewart, who viewed the matter in a different light. They pointed out that the enemy were greatly superior in guns and foot-soldiers, but proportionally inferior in cavalry: that this advantage would be lost if they advanced to the Saale to meet them, because the Thuringian Mountains in the rear would afford the enemy a secure place of retreat, where

CHAP. VIII. 1813.

the Allied horse could not follow them; whereas the Allies themselves, if worsted, would have no line of retreat but by the bridge of Dresden, as the others, especially that at Magdeburg, were in the hands of the enemy. Wittgenstein and the Allied generals were not insensible to these considerations, but they deemed them overbalanced by the importance of striking a decisive blow in the outset of the campaign; and as they were confident of victory, they felt little solicitude about the line of retreat in case of disaster.[1]

[1] Lond. 14-16; Cathcart, 120-122; Wilson, i. 217, 341.

28. New commercial tariff, and conclusion of a treaty of alliance with Russia and Prussia.

Sir Charles Stewart's first acts on the great theatre of German affairs were of a diplomatic, not a military character. An edict had already appeared before his arrival on the 20th April, which declared the abolition of all the restraints under which the commerce of the north of Europe had so long laboured, from the rigorous application of the Continental System; but the tariff of duties which had been substituted in its room, drawn up from interested motives or in ignorance, was so high as to amount to a total prohibition of British manufactures, as well as of the export of Prussian corn. Sir Charles, immediately after his arrival, made representations to Baron Hardenberg on the subject, which were promptly attended to. Assurances were given, which were immediately carried into effect, that the tariff should be provisionally suspended till an arrangement, conjointly with Russia, could be agreed upon. Shortly after, he had the satisfaction of signing the formal treaty of alliance between Great Britain, Russia, and Prussia, the preliminaries of which had already been signed by Lord Cathcart with the Emperor Alexander, by which Russia engaged to keep 200,000 men in the field, exclusive of garrisons, Prussia half as many, in consideration of £2,000,000 instantly advanced by Great Britain.[1]*

[1] Sir Chas. Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, April 30, 1813, MS.; Lond. 13, and Appendix, No. 2. See the Treaty in Martens, Sup. iii. 234; and Schoell, xii. 548.

* Lord Castlereagh's general views of the principles on which the alliance should be conducted were well explained by him in a letter to Lord Cathcart on April 8. "On the political part of the arrangement," said he, "I foresee

29. Mutual advance of the opposite armies.

But the sovereigns and their ministers were soon called by the loud trumpet of war from these diplomatic labours to the dangers and the glories of the field. The French demonstrations of offensive operations were not confined to the main army in front of Dresden. On the Lower Elbe, General Puthod advanced to the margin of that river with 8000 infantry and 3000 horse, while Davoust moved forward on the same quarter from Bremen, in the direction of Rottenburg on Harburg. But this was a diversion merely intended to deceive the Allies as to the real points of attack. The main effort was to be made by the Emperor Napoleon himself in the great plain which stretches from the Saale to the Elbe, and comprises the finest part of Saxony. The force with which he made this advance in all amounted, according to Thiers, whose estimate is founded on the returns in

little difficulty. To make war and to treat together is so obviously the policy of all parties, that I apprehend no hesitation on the part of either power; neither can I suppose you will experience any great reluctance, even on the part of Prussia, to gratify the Prince Regent by *abating the nuisance* of which those small territories *enclavés* in Hanover amount to. The larger arrangements, at least in the north, are in principle understood. The reintegration of Prussia in extent of power is not, of course, intended to supersede the indemnities for Denmark in case she joins; and in the application of these principles hereafter, we may hope that Great Britain and Russia will see justice done.

"The political arrangement of Europe in a larger sense is more difficult at this early moment to decide on. So much depends on events that it is perhaps better not to be too prompt in encountering litigated questions. The main features we are agreed upon: that, to keep France in order, we require great masses; that Prussia, Austria, and Russia ought to be as great and powerful as they have ever been; and that the inferior states must be summoned to assist or pay the forfeit of resistance. I see many inconveniences in premature conclusions, but we ought not to be unprepared.

"As an outline to reason from, I send you, as a private communication, a despatch on which the confederacy in 1805 was founded; the Emperor of Russia probably has not this interesting document at headquarters (interesting it is to my recollection, as I well remember having more than one conversation with Mr Pitt on its details *before he wrote it*): some of the suggestions may now be inapplicable, but it is so masterly an outline for the restoration of Europe, that I should be glad your Lordship would reduce it into distinct propositions, and to learn the bearings of his Imperial Majesty's mind upon its contents.* An unofficial communication of this nature, between two powers that have no partialities to indulge, may prepare them the better to fulfil their duties at a future moment."—LORD CASTLEREAGH *to* LORD CATHCART, *Foreign Office, April* 8, 1813; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, viii. 355, 356.

* This important state paper will be found in *History of Europe*, c. xxxix. § 50, note.

CHAP. VIII. 1813.

the French Depôt de la Guerre, to nearly 200,000 men, but of these not more than two-thirds could by possibility be collected in one field. This immense body—formed by the junction, behind the Saale, of Napoleon descending from the Thuringian Forest, and Eugene ascending from Magdeburg—could not advance along one road without being spun out to an inordinate length, and accordingly it pressed on in two columns towards the Elbe. Ney, Marmont, and the Imperial Guard, moved on the great road from LÜTZEN towards Leipsic; while, on their right, Bertrand and Oudinot remained in reserve on the Upper Saale, with orders to move from Naumburg on Stossen; and on the left Eugene, with the corps of Lauriston and Macdonald, was to debouch from Merseburg, and move direct by the road of Mackranstadt on Leipsic. On their side the Allies made corresponding movements, and instead of awaiting the enemy behind the Elbe, they advanced to meet him in the Saxon plains. Their forces were spread over the whole country from the Elbe to the Saale, the grand headquarters being at Altenburg. Wittgenstein, with the Russians, was at Zwickau; Kutusoff's corps some miles in advance of Dresden; Milaradowitch, with his advance, at Chemnitz. The Prussians, again under Blucher, formed the extreme left of the Allied line, which leaned on the broken ridges which formed the Thuringian Forest, with their headquarters at Altenburg; D'York was farther to the right towards Dessau; while on the extreme right Bulow observed Magdeburg.[1]

[1] Lond. 18; Cathcart, 122, 123; Thiers, xv. 463, 464; Marmont, v. 14, 15.

30. Combat of Weissenfels, and death of Bessières. May 1.

When the hostile arrays were in this manner advancing by common consent against each other, they necessarily soon came into collision. It took place for the first time at Weissenfels, and was attended by a melancholy event, which overspread the French army with mourning. On the evening of the 30th April, some battalions of Ney's corps had gallantly borne the charges of Winzingerode's cavalry, which was making a reconnoissance towards Weis-

senfels; and as they were young troops who had met the enemy for the first time, Napoleon rose early on the following morning and set out for the front, attended by Ney, Mortier, Bessières, Soult, Duroc, and Caulaincourt, to encourage the conscripts by his presence, and animate them by his praise. Ney's men, being destitute of cavalry to form the vedettes and precede the march of the regular bodies, were moving in squares with a thick line of tirailleurs in front, when, on the edge of the steep banks of the ravine of the Rippach, they were met by Winzingerode's horse, which occupied in force the opposite bank. The division Souham, which was in advance, had just crossed the ravine, and was extending into a line of squares to open fire upon the enemy's squadrons, when Marshal Bessières, who was in the suite of Napoleon, though out of his proper place, being commander of the cavalry of the Guard, having gone a little to the right to observe the enemy somewhat nearer, was struck by a cannon-ball, which at one blow laid him dead on the field. An old companion in arms of Napoleon in the Italian campaigns, he had been wounded in the battle of Wagram, but on that occasion he escaped with a severe contusion. Brave, loyal, and devoted, Bessières had been a faithful friend to the French Emperor, and had often had the courage to tell him useful but disagreeable truths. He was deeply regretted by him and the whole army. "Death is approaching us," said Napoleon, when he saw his old companion in arms struck down, as he put spurs to his horse and moved quickly on, while the mangled corpse was carried away on a military cloak.[1]

[1] Thiers, xv. 464, 465; Marmont, v. 14, 15; Cathcart, 124; Lond. 20.

31. Movements before battle of Lützen. May 2.

This mournful catastrophe was the immediate forerunner of a desperate shock. From the direction taken by the main columns of the enemy, and especially the line of march of the powerful French centre under Napoleon in person, it was evident that they were converging towards Leipsic, from whence they would roll on in a

CHAP. VIII. 1813

concentrated mass towards Dresden. To counteract this movement, and in the hopes of engaging the enemy's columns in detail, and of crushing the most advanced before the supports came up, Wittgenstein proposed a plan of operations to the Emperor Alexander which was approved of by that monarch, and immediately carried into execution. This was to move the whole army across the Elster during the night of the 1st May, and advance directly against the right flank of the French columns as they pressed on for Leipsic. Milaradowitch, with the Russian Guards, grenadiers, and reserve cavalry, forming the flower of their army, who was at Zeitz, was to cross the Elster there, and descend its left bank; Blucher from Borna, and Wittgenstein with his own corps of Russians, and D'York with his Prussians from Rotha, were to march at the same time to Pegau, on the same river, where they also were to cross. The effect of these movements was to bring nearly all the Allied army, with the exception of Kleist, who was left in reserve at Leipsic, early in the morning of the 2d May, into the open level country lying a few leagues to the west of Leipsic, having their right on the village of Werben on the Flossgraben, and their left at Dombsen, a small village situated on a similar stream which falls into the Saale, near Weissenfels. The country here is, upon the whole, level, though with some inequality of surface, and for the most part under a rude and imperfect tillage. A considerable ridge or undulation rose in the centre, between the line of approach of the two armies, and in a great degree veiled their movements and approach from each other. The Emperor Alexander and King of Prussia, with Lord Cathcart, were already at Pegau, at five in the morning of the 2d May, where they were anxiously awaiting the arrival of the troops to cross the bridge and surmount the defile there. As soon as the troops had crossed, the Emperor Alexander was conducted by Wittgenstein to the top of a hill a little in advance, from whence there was an extensive view, com-

manding among other objects a bivouac where an advanced corps of the enemy had rested on the preceding night. Wittgenstein was so little aware of the magnitude of the force which the enemy had concentrated upon this point, that he promised to put his Majesty in possession of the corps he saw before him before an hour was over. Shortly after, the King of Prussia rode up, and the sovereigns and their staff dismounted, and took post on the summit of the hill near a rude cairn, the monument of war in former days, in the confident hope of seeing this promise realised by the troops, which were coming up rapidly on all sides.[1]

[1] Cathcart, 126, 127; Thiers, xv. 466, 467; Lond. 21.

32. Battle of Lützen. May 7.

But a very different future from what they anticipated awaited the Allied sovereigns on this eventful day. Napoleon, assuming everywhere a vigorous offensive, had already pushed Eugene, who, in the course of the 1st, had arrived at Mackranstadt, straight on towards Leipsic, directing him to send Lauriston's corps direct on that town, while Macdonald's was to advance to the right towards Zwickau. The division Durutte, with Latour Maubourg's cavalry and a strong body of artillery, was a little in the rear of these corps, in order to support any which might require aid, while Napoleon himself followed along the great road from Lützen in reserve with the Guard. Foreseeing, however, what was really the fact, that the Allies, during this advance of his concentrated force upon Leipsic, might ascend the course of the Elster, and cross over so as to threaten his right and take him in flank in the middle of his movement, the French Emperor retained Marshal Ney in the environs of Lützen, and established his corps in a group of villages in that neighbourhood, of which the principal was called Kaia, which became the theatre of the most obstinate conflict in the battle which ensued. Marmont, Bertrand, and Oudinot, with their respective corps—the first on the banks of the Rippach, the second a little behind him, the last still on the margin of the Saale—had orders to range

CHAP. VIII. 1813.

themselves as they successively came up on the right of Ney, to co-operate with him in defending the right flank from the attack with which they were threatened, and having done so, to advance in a solid mass to the Elster, between Zwickau and Pegau. Thus, Ney's corps, grouped around Kaia, was the central pivot on which the whole army turned; the one half in prosecuting its offensive onward movement towards Leipsic, the other half in covering the advance of the first from the expected attack on the right. On the other hand, the three Allied corps of Blucher, Wittgenstein, and D'York, headed by Blucher, nearly 70,000 strong, had advanced in the night, as already mentioned, across the Elster, and were moving straight upon the French right, under Ney, strongly posted in the villages of Kaia, Eisdorf, Rahna, Gross and Klein Görschen. Thus the two armies during the morning had respectively passed each other, Napoleon's left being in advance and threatening Leipsic, held by Kleist's corps; while the whole remainder of the Allied army, which, with Milaradowitch in reserve, who, however, could not be up till late in the evening, might amount to 80,000 sabres and bayonets, was turning the French right, and threatening their communications.[1]

[1] Lond. 21, 22; Cathcart, 129, 130; Thiers, xv. 468-471; Wilson i. 356-359.

33. Leipsic is carried by the French.

Napoleon started from Lützen at ten o'clock, accompanied by his Marshals, and went at the gallop to his left, where Lauriston's corps under Eugene, supported by Durutte's reserve and the Guard, were already engaged in an attack on Leipsic, defended by Kleist's Prussians. The fusillade was then already extremely warm, and the wooded banks of the Elster, and its many branches, afterwards known by so terrible a catastrophe to the French army, were the theatre of many desperate and bloody conflicts. Kleist's men, animated by the strongest feelings of patriotism and indignation against the French, fought with the greatest resolution, and for long defended the approach to the town against all the efforts of the enemy. But the contest was too unequal—

one corps against three, supported by the flower of the French army—to be long maintained with success. Maison's division, forming the advance of Lauriston, at length overcame all obstacles, and penetrated into the town, across the bridges and marshy banks of the Elster, along with the retiring Prussians. But while he was enjoying at a distance the prospect of this success, which he surveyed through a telescope, and which recalled the triumphs of his earlier years, Napoleon was startled by a tremendous cannonade which suddenly broke out on the right, and soon became so terrible as to bespeak a desperate conflict. After listening for a few seconds to the increasing roar, he quickly turned to Ney, who was by his side, and said, "While we are trying to turn them they are turning us; but there is no harm done—they will find us prepared for them at all points." He then ordered that Marshal to return at the gallop to his corps, to establish himself and maintain himself to the last man in the five villages, which he might easily do, as he had 48,000 men under his orders, and would be powerfully supported on both flanks and in rear. Ney instantly set out as directed, and immediately the Emperor ordered a general conversion of his army to meet the new danger which threatened it. Lauriston received orders to keep hold of Leipsic, but occupy it only with one of his divisions, and to move the two others to his rear, so as to be at hand to support the left of Ney; while Macdonald was to march in the same direction, and establish himself at Eisdorf, on the Flossgraben, in the same vicinity. The Guard and Durutte's division followed in the same direction, with Latour Maubourg's horse.[1]

[1] Lond. 22; Thiers, xv. 469, 470; Cathcart, 128-130.

34. Success of the Allies on the French right, and desperate conflicts there.

Perilous as this operation was when attempted at such a time, and in presence of such an enemy, it could no longer be postponed, for the progress of the Allies on the right had already become most alarming. Blucher's force, 24,000 strong, was the leading corps, which came first into action. It made a violent attack on the village

CHAP. VIII. 1813.

of Gross Görschen, which, defended by Souham's division of Ney's corps, was carried without much difficulty; for the Prussians, headed by Blucher, whose vigour, seventy-two winters had noways diminished, fought with the utmost resolution, being animated, not merely by hatred of the French, but by the presence of the two sovereigns who watched the progress of the conflict from a neighbouring eminence. Great was the joy in the breasts of the Emperor and King when they beheld this auspicious commencement of the conflict, and saw, from the hasty march of the corps forming the French centre across the plain towards their right, that this attack had entirely disconcerted the French Emperor's assault on the Allied right. But it soon became evident that the conflict in the villages was to be more serious than had been at first anticipated, and that, so far from having to deal with an isolated corps in the villages, it was supported by at least half the French army. Though driven from Gross Görschen, which lay in the front, the enemy still occupied in strength the villages of Klein Görschen and Rahna, which were situated in a little valley, while the heights beyond were covered with a numerous artillery, and the whole corps of Ney, still 45,000 strong, in battle array. At the same time Marmont's corps, headed by that Marshal himself, having crossed the Rippach, debouched from Starsiedel, in front of Winzingerode, who was coming up with his Russians on the other side. Marmont arranged his men in squares, united to the right of Souham, and covered the rallying of Girard's division of Ney's corps, which had fallen into confusion at the Allied attack. But Blucher, transported with ardour, and confident of victory, undeterred by these obstacles, continued the assault; and, himself heading Ziethen's Prussians, carried the villages of Klein Görschen and Rahna, thus making himself master of three out of the five villages which constituted the great central fortress, upon the possession of which the issue of the battle depended.[1]

[1] Thiers, xv. 478, 479; Marmont, v. 17, 18; Lond. 23; Cathcart, 130, 131.

CHAP. VIII. 1813.

Matters were in this state, and to appearance eminently favourable to the Allies, when Ney arrived. Blucher now encountered an adversary worthy of himself; and reinforcements coming up on both sides from all parts, the battle became concentrated in and around the five villages, where it raged with the utmost violence. Both parties brought up their reserves, and the slaughter on either side was terrific. Ney pushed forward his remaining division, which had hitherto been in reserve behind Kaia; Macdonald came up and ranged himself on his left; while Marmont, with his divisions still in square, stood on his right, and with admirable steadiness supported the fire of a hundred and fifty guns directed against them. Encouraged and reinforced by these additional forces, Ney's men, many of whom were conscripts, who had then been under fire for the first time, retook Rahna and Klein Görschen, and drove back the Prussians into Gross Görschen, their first conquest. But Blucher, who had the Prussian Guards and reserves in hand, advanced at the head of these admirable troops, and shouting "Vorwärts!" as he led them on, succeeded a second time in expelling the French and establishing himself in these villages. Blucher himself was wounded in the arm; but without quitting the field he pressed on, and carried for the first time Kaia, while his cavalry charged with the utmost vehemence the divisions of Compans and Bonnet, of Marmont's corps, who in square steadily resisted the assaults, but suffered grievously under the fire of artillery. The victory seemed gained; and if the Russian Guards and grenadiers had been at hand to support Blucher, and secure the advantage won, it would have been so. It was now six o'clock, and the Allies, by sheer force and hard fighting, had won more than a mile of ground;[1] of five villages, which formed the key of the field of battle, four were in their hands, though they had hitherto engaged only the corps of Winzingerode and Blucher, which only mustered 40,000 combatants, while

35. Great successes of the Allies in the five villages.

[1] Lond. 23; Thiers, xv. 482, 483; Cathcart, 130, 131; Marmont, v. 20, 21; Wilson, i. 355.

CHAP. VIII. 1813.

D'York and Wittgenstein, with 18,000 men, and the Russian Guards and reserves, 12,000 more, had not as yet fired a shot.

36. Crisis of the battle, which turns to the advantage of the French.

Blucher now saw that the decisive moment had come, and that a vigorous attack directed against the enemy's centre would secure the victory. He urged the Emperor and King to take advantage of the propitious movement, and, by a united effort of the whole reserves, pierce the enemy's line, and win the day. After some delay, arising from the time lost in consulting and transmitting the orders of such elevated personages, the advice was taken, and Wittgenstein and D'York were ordered to the front. They advanced accordingly with loud hurrahs as to certain victory, passed over the ruins of Klein Görschen and Rahna, and through the burning edifices of Kaia, and attacked the remains of Ney's corps, half destroyed, and Marmont's men, who were drawn up in square on the other side of those villages. The steady squares, by a rolling fire, long repulsed both the attacks of the infantry and the charges of the cavalry; but still the Allies gained ground. Marmont's squares fell back to a new position in the rear, a little in front of Starsiedel. Meanwhile Prince Eugene of Wirtemberg was disputing the village of Eissdorf with the leading division of Macdonald's corps on Ney's left flank; but after a successful assault on that village, from which the French were expelled, he found himself in presence of, and outflanked by, Prince Eugene Beauharnais, who had now come up from this side of Leipsic, and it was only by the most heroic efforts that he succeeded in maintaining himself in that village until nightfall.[1]

[1] Marmont, v. 22, 23; Thiers, xv. 484, 485; Cathcart, 130, 131; Lond. 23, 24; Wilson, i. 357, 358.

37. Last effort of Napoleon, which arrested the Allies.

Hitherto the battle, though variously checkered, had been upon the whole decidedly to the advantage of the Allies: and in the villages in the centre, in particular, where the contest had been most obstinate, and success was of most importance, their progress had been very marked. But the time had now arrived when the aspect

of affairs changed. The obstinate and bloody conflict in the villages had gained for Napoleon what he alone wanted — time. At first, when the Emperor arrived on the field near the villages, he had only the division Ricard, the fifth of Ney's corps, in hand, and several battalions of conscripts were dispersing and flying on all sides. "Young men," said Napoleon, "I reckoned on you to save the empire, and you fly!" Animated by these words, the regiments rallied, and the conflict continued with great obstinacy, on both sides, and varied success, till the Guard, 18,000 strong, the reserve artillery, under Drouot, and cavalry, came up, flanked by the two remaining divisions of Macdonald's corps, and the whole of Bertrand's. These great reinforcements speedily changed the face of affairs. Napoleon saw that the decisive moment had arrived, and that, by a vigorous effort in the centre, he might regain the ground which had been lost, and snatch victory from the enemy's grasp. He took his measures accordingly. Drawing up the Old Guard in six squares, like so many fortresses to guard the centre, he caused the squares of the Young Guard to deploy into columns of attack, and ordered them to advance against the enemy in the villages, supported by the fire of the eighty guns of the Guard under Drouot, which were placed in an oblique position on the French right, on an eminence a little in advance of Starsiedel. These measures, instantly ordered, were executed with vigour and unity. The sixteen battalions of the Young Guard, led by Marshal Mortier and General Dumoutier, rallying the broken remains of Ney's corps, advanced against Blucher and Wittgenstein's men, by this time sorely weakened by fire, and wearied by a night and a day of uninterrupted marching and fighting, and drove them out of the smoking ruins of Kaia; while, at the same time, on the French left, Macdonald's divisions outflanked Prince Eugene of Wirtemberg, and drove him, though reinforced, into Eissdorf;[1] and, on their right, Marmont's corps also outflanked

[1] Thiers, xv. 485, 486 Marmont, v. 22; Cathcart, 131, 132; Lond. 24, 25.

CHAP. VIII. 1813.

the enemy, and, with the aid of Bertrand's men, sensibly gained ground in the open country towards Starsiedel. In the centre the Allies still occupied the ruins of the villages which had been so obstinately disputed, but they were evidently outnumbered and outflanked on either wing.

38. The Allies resolve to retreat, and Blucher's nocturnal irruptions into Marmont's lines.

Matters having assumed this serious aspect, a council of war was held at the Allied headquarters, which were still on the summit of the hill where, as already mentioned, they had taken post at the beginning of the battle. Opinions were there much divided as to the course which should be pursued. Blucher was clear to renew the battle in the centre with the whole Russian Guard, in room of which Milaradowitch—who, with 12,000 men, could come up during the night—would serve as a reserve. But Wittgenstein, and Diebitch, his chief of the staff, answered that, as they were outnumbered and outflanked on either side, there would be the greatest risk in renewing the conflict on the following day: to which the chief of artillery added a reason still more convincing—viz., that there were not supplies of ammunition adequate to a second day's battle. The Allied sovereigns, swayed by these arguments, and in secret conscious that they were overmatched, if not defeated, ordered a retreat at all points towards Dresden, the headquarters being withdrawn during the night to Pegau. Indignant at his advice not being followed, Blucher asked and obtained leave to make an attack with the Prussian cavalry, headed by the *Garde à cheval*, on the enemy's lines. The attack was made, accordingly, about eleven at night, by Blucher, at the head of five thousand horse. This sally, however, produced no lasting results. The Prussian horse were brought up by a deep ravine, in which they got entangled, and the fire of the dense masses of infantry who, on the first alarm, stood to their arms;[1] and the incident only added another to the numerous proofs which the annals of war afford, that a conquering army is

1 Marmont, v. 21-23; Thiers, xv. 487, 488; Lond. 24; Cathcart, 132, 133.

never nearer disaster than in the first moments of repose after victory.*

In this well-fought battle, in which victory, after long inclining to the Allied side, at last veered round to the French, the former had only 82,000 men in all at their disposal, of whom 12,000, under Milaradowitch, never came up till next morning; so that the battle was fought with 70,000 only, while Napoleon had 120,000 in hand,

39. Results of the battle, and forces on both sides.

* Sir Charles Stewart, on 6th May, transmitted the following account of this battle to Lord Castlereagh :—

"The headquarters of General Count Wittgenstein, commander-in-chief of the Russian army, were removed from Delitzch to Lindenau, near Leipsic, on the 27th ult. General Kleist entered Halle, with his corps d'armee, where he was received with enthusiasm. The corps of General Milaradowitch removed from Penig to Altenburg on the 29th. General Blucher was at Borna, and the left wing of the Allied army extended towards Hoff. General Bulow, on the right, was at Rotha. On the 30th, Count Wittgenstein transposed his headquarters to Zwickau. An affair had taken place between the Prussians and the enemy, at Merseburg, in which the former sustained some loss. The enemy showed an intention of passing the Saale at various points. He constructed a bridge at Rosbach for this purpose, and appeared to extend himself into the plain on the right bank of the river. This was the ground on which it was imagined Count Wittgenstein would give battle. The advanced-guard of the enemy, during the passage of the Saale, had affairs at Naumburg and Weissenfels, in which the Prussians conducted themselves with the utmost intrepidity. The enemy's chief force was supposed to be at Naumburg, but a strong column, under General Bertrand, was moving on Altenburg.

"On the 30th, the Allied force was concentrated between Altenburg and Leipsic; the corps of General Blucher at Rotha; and the corps of Generals Wittgenstein and D'York at Zwickau and Zeitz; the corps of General Winzingerode at Lützen; and that of Kleist at Lindenau.

"On the 1st May, the corps at Lützen, about 18,000, was attacked by a very superior force, and driven back on Zwickau, retiring, however, in good order. On the morning of the 2d, the corps of Generals Blucher, Wittgenstein, D'York, and Winzingerode formed a line of battle on the left bank of the Elster; the right at Zwickau, the left extending towards Pegau and Zeitz, where General Milaradowitch's corps was placed. The corps of General Tormazoff, comprising the Russian Guards, was in reserve behind Pegau.

"The first attempt in the morning was made by the Allies to cut off some of the enemy's troops in two detached villages called the 'Geras,' but failed from want of combination. They then advanced in line, and found the enemy strongly posted in an advantageous position bounding the plains before Lützen, and in villages of which Great and Little Görschen, the Geras, and Kreutsdorf were the principal. It was reported that Buonaparte had declared to his army that he would fight a battle without the aid of cavalry, and he seemed evidently to have taken up a position with this view, occupying in force the small villages alluded to, the flank and communications between them being supported by lines of artillery and strong columns of infantry, thus manifesting a determination to force the Allies to contend with him upon his own ground, and all

CHAP. VIII. 1813.

of whom at least 110,000 took a part in the fight. It was this great superiority of force which, by enabling the French Emperor to outflank them at both sides, in the end compelled them to retreat. The loss of the French was, by their own admission, 18,000 men, and that of the Allies about the same, or rather less. Of this great loss, no less than 12,000 had fallen on the corps of Marshal Ney, which had suffered so severely that the Emperor was obliged to put the whole division of Durutte under his orders to fill up the void, and leave the entire corps behind at Lützen, in his subsequent advance,

his hopes of victory rested upon the success of this project. The enemy showed himself in different directions, advancing only to retire, and draw the Allies into the positions he had chosen and improved by every aid of art.

"A very brisk cannonade commenced the action on both sides. The villages of Gross and Klein Görschen were soon set on fire, and taken by the Allied troops, but not without loss. Heavy bodies of cavalry were sent to the left to prevent the enemy from turning that flank; and the Allied troops were frequently drawn within the enemy's fire without producing the effect their exertions merited. The villages alluded to, when taken, afforded no solid advantages, as the enemy were equally strongly posted, barricaded, and intrenched in adjoining ones.

"The cavalry of the Allies (more especially the Prussians) advanced often so rapidly upon the French infantry that they could not get back to the strong villages from whence they had debouched, and they consequently received the charges of the enemy in squares. Great slaughter ensued, and the Prussian cavalry inspired their allies the Russians with the greatest confidence and admiration. The action continued in a struggle for the different villages of Lützen, the Görschens, and Geras, which were taken and retaken several times, the Görschens remaining, however, always in the hands of the Allies. Towards the close of the day, however, a very strong column arrived from Leipsic, belonging to Beauharnais's corps, which threatened the right of the Allies, and prevented their making further progress. They remained on the ground they had so gallantly fought over, masters of the field of battle. The Emperor of Russia, the King of Prussia, the Princes of Prussia were present, animating the troops by the greatest display of personal exertions and bravery.

"The result of the battle was the capture of sixteen pieces of cannon, some standards, and some hundreds of prisoners. The battle lasted from ten o'clock in the morning till dark. It is very difficult to obtain any correct information as to the loss of the enemy. That of the Allies may be estimated at about 12,000 Prussians and 3000 Russians *hors de combat*. The main efforts in the action fell upon General Blucher's corps, who was himself wounded, as well as the chief of the Prussian *Etat Major*, General Scharnhorst, the latter severely. Many most distinguished officers were killed and wounded, among the former the Prince of Hesse Homburg."—SIR CHARLES STEWART *to* LORD CASTLEREAGH, *Dresden, May* 6, 1813; *MS. Londonderry Papers*. This is the best account of the battle, and the most intelligible in a few words, which is anywhere to be met with.

to provide for the wounded. Prince Leopold of Hesse Homburg was killed; the Prince of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, and the celebrated General Scharnhorst, were among the wounded. The Prince died next day; Scharnhorst lingered till the 28th June, when he expired, universally regretted, for he was one of the officers to whom Prussia was most indebted for the marvellous resurrection of her military force in this year.[1]

[1] Lond. 26; Cathcart, 132, 133; Thiers, xv. 493, 494; Wilson, i. 359.

40. Retreat of the Allies to Dresden.

After this desperate shock, the Allied armies retired early on the morning of the 3d to Borna and Altenberg, from whence they continued their retrograde movement on the succeeding day towards Meissen and Dresden. They were not in the smallest degree disquieted in this retreat; the great losses sustained by the French in the battle, and their immense inferiority in cavalry, rendering pursuit impossible. Though the Allies, however, were not molested in their retrograde movement, yet there was necessarily a certain degree of confusion from the withdrawing on two roads of such large bodies of men, and long trains of artillery, wounded, and baggage. "Much disorder," says Sir Charles Stewart, "was observable. The roads were choked up with the immense train of carriages and baggage of every description. On one road alone 13,000 waggons passed in succession." Precautionary measures were immediately adopted to prevent the Allied army from being attacked in crossing the Elbe. It soon became evident that the line of that river was to be abandoned. Napoleon, on his part, with reason, proud of his glorious victory, wrote in the most sanguine terms to Paris, Munich, and Stuttgard, announcing, with much exaggeration, his triumph, and declaring that he was about to march on Dresden and Berlin with 140,000 men, and would speedily drive the Russians beyond the Vistula. In fact, he prepared so far to carry his boasts into effect, that he immediately put 80,000 men under the command of Marshal Ney, who, on the 4th, entered Leipsic at the head of his troops in great pomp, and immedi-

CHAP. VIII. 1813.

ately directed his steps towards Torgau, to secure the fidelity, which had become more than doubtful, of the Saxon governor there.* Meanwhile the Emperor himself, with a much larger force, followed the Allied armies to the gates of Dresden. By bringing up all his reinforcements, he was enabled to advance at the head of 140,000 men against the Saxon capital. Two hundred and twenty thousand in all under his banners approached the banks of the Elbe.[1]

[1] Lond. 25-27; Cathcart, 133, 134; Thiers, xv. 492-495.

41. The Allies resolve to retire to Bautzen: its strategic advantages.

Long experience had demonstrated that an inferior army can never, for any length time, maintain the line of a river against a superior one; and in the case of the Elbe, as the French were masters of Torgau, Magdeburg, and Wittenberg, it was obviously hopeless to make the attempt. The Allied sovereigns, accordingly, had no thought of endeavouring to maintain themselves either in Dresden or on the line of the great river which flows through it; but in withdrawing beyond its walls they were looking out for a favourable ground on which to try a second time the fortunes of war. The environs of BAUTZEN afforded such a battle-field. It was a strategic point already celebrated in the seven years' war, and the importance of which was well known to the great Frederick. The left to an army facing eastward rests on the Reisengebirge or Giant Mountains, the lower slopes of which were covered by a thick and impenetrable forest, altogether impervious to cavalry or guns, and nearly so to foot soldiers. To the northward of this woody ridge stretched a wide champaign country, level when compared with the Bohemian Mountains, but yet by no means flat, but for the most part made up of low hills and undulating eminences, intersected by various streams which descended from the mountains into the plain, and being

* Ney's force was raised to this amount by adding to his own corps and Durutte's division (commanded by Reynier) Victor's corps, which had been left at Magdeburg, and Sebastiani's force (formed by Puthod's division and his own cavalry) from the Lower Elbe.

often shut in by rocky banks or steep declivities, afforded very defensible positions. This position covered the main communication of the Russians with their rear in Poland, from whence they not only drew the chief supplies of their army, but expected to be largely reinforced by reserves, under Prince Labanoff and Count Ostermann Tolstoy. What was of not less importance, it brought the Allied army close to a neutral territory belonging to Austria, a power too great to be disregarded by either party, which effectually prevented their left flank being turned, and brought them into a convenient situation for carrying on those secret negotiations, from which, in the event of the French Emperor refusing to treat on reasonable terms, they anticipated open and important succour.[1]

[1] Cathcart, 138, 139; Sir Charles Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, May 10, 1813, MS.

42. Evacuation of Dresden by the Allies, and its entry by the French. May 8.

The French armies, after a few trifling combats with the Allied rearguard, arrived on the summit of the beautiful amphitheatre of hills which lie on the western side of Dresden. It was with joy that the inhabitants soon beheld the Russians retiring into the town, traversing the streets, and issuing on the opposite side. Presently the two bridges of boats which they had constructed, and the wooden arches in the centre of the great one, which had been inserted to supply the place of the stone one which Davoust had blown up on the first approach of the Allied forces, were seen to be in flames, and it was evident that the whole city on the left bank of the Elbe was already evacuated. The French columns immediately after entered under Eugene Beauharnais, and were met by a deputation from the municipality, which came to implore the clemency of the conqueror. Eugene forwarded them to Napoleon, who shortly after arrived at the gates of the city.[2]

[2] Lond. 29, 30; Cathcart, 140; Thiers, xv. 498, 499; Wilson, ii. 6.

43. Stern reception of the magistrates by Napoleon.

Napoleon awaited the deputation on horseback at the gate with a threatening look. He had not forgotten the enthusiastic reception given by the inhabitants to the Allied sovereigns; and he received the magistrates therefore with a severe air, reminded them of their tergiversa-

CHAP. VIII. 1813.

tion, and the ungrateful return they had made for all the benefits he had heaped upon them; and added that if he acted only by the laws of war he would subject them to the last severities of military execution. He was willing, however, to forget the past, and again restore them to his favour in consideration of the fidelity, age, and virtues of their sovereign. Let them therefore receive him with the respect which was becoming; restore again, *but for him alone*, the triumphal arches they had so imprudently raised to the Emperor Alexander; and retain in their hearts a profound sense of the clemency with which they had been treated, for but for his interposition they would have undergone all the horrors of a town carried by assault. The least wavering in their duty, the slightest indication of a return to the enemy, would be followed by the most terrible calamities. With these words he dismissed the trembling magistrates and entered the city, in which the French maintained the most exact discipline. The Emperor was lodged in the King's palace, while, by a strange anomaly, the King of Prussia still remained in the house he occupied in the new town, on the right bank of the river.[1]

[1] Thiers, xv. 497-501; Cathcart, 140; Odel. i. 67.

44. Passage of the Elbe by the French.

Next morning the Emperor was on horseback by daybreak, and descended the Elbe with a strong body of infantry and the whole artillery of the Guard, to Priesnitz, where he had resolved to force a passage. The eighty guns of the Guard having been first established on the heights on the left bank, a severe fire began between them and fifty Russian guns on the opposite bank. But the French fire was superior both in position and weight of pieces, and under cover of it three hundred Voltigeurs were rowed across, and soon succeeded by others who established themselves on the right bank. The superiority of the French fire then enabled them to throw a bridge across, which, under cover of the discharge from Drouot's guns, was completed before night, and the passage began in great force.[2] At the same time, the Allies,

[2] Thiers, xv. 501, 502; Odel. i. 78, 79; Lond. 29, 30; Wilson, ii. 7.

having gained all that they desired—namely, time for their immense trains of artillery and baggage to defile on the other side—withdrew at all points from the right bank of the river; and the French, having re-established the broken arches of the great bridge at Dresden, the passage went on there regularly as well as at Priesnitz and Meissen.

45. The King of Saxony is reconciled to Napoleon.

Napoleon was well aware of the secret negotiations which had been going on between the Allied sovereigns and the King of Saxony, which, indeed, the sudden departure of the latter from Ratisbon for Prague, and his taking refuge there under the protection of the Emperor of Austria, had rendered patent to all the world. But though he never paused in his ambitious projects, yet he could when he chose put an effectual bridle upon his wrath. The great importance of regaining Saxony for an ally, and securing the points of Torgau and Dresden, so likely to prove pivots on which military operations would turn in the campaign, induced him on this occasion to dissemble with the King, and feign ignorance of what he really knew in regard to the proceedings of the Saxon monarch. He pretended, therefore, to be ignorant of the double-dealing of that potentate, and to see in him only a loyal sovereign misled by bad councils, and yielding to the pressure of temporary necessity. He despatched, however, at the same time, one of his aides-de-camp to Prague with a formal summons, under pain of dethronement, to return immediately with all the cavalry and artillery under his immediate orders to Dresden, and instantly to surrender Torgau with the 10,000 Saxons who were within its walls to General Reynier, who was at its gates ready to receive the keys. This summons terminated the indecision of the Saxon sovereign. He did all that was demanded of him; returned to Dresden with his fine cavalry and horse-artillery, and sent orders to General Thielman, who commanded in Torgau, to deliver it up immediately to the French troops.[1]

[1] Sir Chas. Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, May 16, 1813, MS.; Thiers, xv. 593, 594.

This important success also enabled Napoleon to as-

CHAP. VIII.

1813.

46. Bolder tone assumed with the Cabinet of Vienna.

sume a bolder tone in his diplomatic communications with the Cabinet of Vienna at this period. Immediately after his entry into Dresden, accordingly, he despatched orders to M. de Narbonne there, to insist peremptorily on a categorical explanation from Austria on the conduct her Government meant to pursue in regard to the treaty of alliance with France, of which they were delaying to implement the obligations. Narbonne went with the note to Metternich, in order to enforce verbally the demands contained in it. "Hitherto," said the French minister, "I have feigned to be satisfied with the excuse you made for not going on with your engagements, and to overlook the extent of your armaments, which you would be the first to inform us of, if they were made in our interest. But I am now forced by the events in Galicia to demand from you a categorical explanation, and to insist upon knowing once for all whether you are or are not our ally, and whether you will adhere to your engagements under the treaty of 14th March 1812. If you still adhere to it, it is absolutely necessary that you should put the Austrian contingent under the orders of the Emperor Napoleon, and obey his orders by giving up all thoughts of disarming the Polish corps." "We are still your friends," replied M. de Metternich, "but we are also mediators: and as long as our part as mediators is not played out, it would be inconsistent to appear on the theatre as armed belligerents. I pray you, therefore, do not in the mean time put us in a false position, and throw away our influence by asking us at present to abandon the character of mediators. If I refuse you 30,000 men just now, it is because I wish to put at your disposal 150,000 when we are at one about the terms of the peace which may be acceptable to Europe." Finding himself thus eluded by the artful Minister, M. de Narbonne demanded and obtained an audience of the Emperor, but he adhered to the statement of his able Premier. Narbonne upon this demanded a second in-

terview with Metternich, and he at last drove the latter into an admission "that the armaments going forward were intended only to give full effect to the mediation; that the alliance, though subsisting as a principle, could not come into operation as a rule of action, as long as the *rôle* of mediation was not exhausted." Though this answer was far from being satisfactory to the French minister, he could get nothing more from the Austrian; and to soften the refusal of any further explanation, the latter agreed that the Polish corps should not be disarmed in its progress through Bohemia on its way to Saxony, on condition that the passage should be as expeditious as possible.[1]

[1] Sir Chas. Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, May 14, 1813, MS.; Thiers, xv. 509, 510.

47. Metternich's proposals on hearing of the battle of Lützen.

The impression produced by the battle of Lützen at Vienna, however, soon became such, that it all but stopped these angry recriminations, by giving an entirely different turn to the negotiations. The Allied party at the Austrian capital at first loudly proclaimed the battle as a victory, and the Russian general did the same, with some countenance from the Emperor Alexander, though the King of Prussia, Lord Cathcart, and Sir Charles Stewart, described it in its true colours. Metternich at once saw how the fact stood; but he was skilful enough not only to allow the French diplomatist to gain nothing by that circumstance, but to turn it to his own advantage. He immediately repaired to M. de Narbonne, and assured him that the victory of Napoleon in no degree surprised him, for he fully expected it, and it was the basis of all his calculations; that it was now evident the English, Russians, and Prussians must abate two-thirds of their demands, but that the remaining third contained proposals so reasonable and essential to the peace of Europe, that it was indispensable that the French Emperor in his turn should accede to them; that it became the mediating power to enter upon its functions immediately, for else it would be too late; and that with this view he proposed to send immediately two envoys to the head-

CHAP. VIII. 1813.

quarters of the belligerents, with such proposals as seemed reasonable; and for this purpose he proposed to send the Comte de Bubna, who he knew would prove agreeable, to the headquarters of Napoleon, and Count Stadion, so well known for his anti-Gallican principles, to those of the Allies. He added, that, so far from the known prepossessions of that negotiator being prejudicial to the interests of Napoleon, they would prove eminently beneficial, because they would enable him to state, and dispose the Allied sovereigns to hear from him, many rude and disagreeable truths, which could in no other way reach their ears.[1]

[1] Thiers, xv. 514, 515.

48. Metternich's proposals for a general peace.

M. de Narbonne having requested to know what were the conditions which Austria intended to propose to the belligerents, M. de Metternich at once complied, adding that he did not desire to impose them as conditions on the French Emperor, but only to submit them for his consideration. They were as follows: The suppression of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, and its restoration to Prussia, under the exception of certain cessions to Austria and Russia; the abandonment of the Confederation of the Rhine; and the renunciation by France of the Hanse towns—that is, Hamburg, Lubeck, and Bremen. Nothing was to be said of Holland, Italy, or Spain, for fear of raising up insurmountable difficulties, nor of a maritime peace, in order to remove all obstacles to the conclusion of a Continental one, which was the most urgent matter. Such were Austria's proposals to France after the Moscow disaster had been slightly effaced by the Saxon victory! They left France still Westphalia, Lombardy, Naples, as vassal kingdoms; Holland, Belgium, the Rhenish Provinces, Piedmont, Tuscany, the Roman States, as French departments! With truth did Metternich say, that Louis XIV., in his wildest dreams, never conceived such a dominion.[2]

[2] Thiers, xv. 515; Sir Chas. Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, June 10, 1813, MS.

M. de Narbonne replied, that Napoleon vanquished would never for a moment listen to such terms; victorious, it was in vain to propose them to him. He agreed

in the mean time to transmit them to the Emperor, in return for which concession Metternich agreed to allow the King of Saxony to return to Dresden, which he accordingly did two days after, having previously asked and obtained from Austria a promise of the most absolute secrecy as to his promise of adhesion to her projects of armed mediation. On receiving the proposals of Austria, Napoleon perceived at once the error he had committed in winking at the armaments of that power, excused on the ground of giving weight to her mediation, and saw at length that she was going to turn this armed mediation against his interests. He felt accordingly, and expressed in his private correspondence with Narbonne, the most profound indignation against the Cabinet of Vienna, for thinking for a moment of such terms, or venturing to propose them to him. In his official answer to them, however, he was more moderate; and, without expressly acceding to the terms proposed, he received them in such a way as did not preclude the hope of future accommodation. His mind, however, was in reality made up; he would not submit to anything which he deemed, however unreasonably, humiliation. Yet was it not humiliation to France which was proposed, for she had no interest in the possessions in the north of Germany, and was rather weakened than strengthened by their being tacked to her empire. It was Napoleon alone who was thwarted by the cession of the Hanse towns, and abandonment of the Confederation of the Rhine; but, rather than submit to such a slight, he was willing to imperil the French empire.[1]

49. Which are repudiated with scorn by Napoleon.

[1] Sir Chas. Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, June 4, 1813, MS.; Fain, Guerre de 1813, 184; Thiers, xv. 519, 520.

An accidental circumstance at this time contributed still further to sow the seeds of distrust between Napoleon and the Cabinet of Vienna. A courier was arrested at Dresden, the bearer of despatches from M. de Stackelberg, the Russian minister at Vienna since Austria had assumed the part of a mediator, to M. de Nesselrode, the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, which proved that

50. Secret despatch of Stackelberg to Nesselrode intercepted.

CHAP. VIII. 1813.

Metternich, while holding out the olive branch to Napoleon, was in reality doing the same, in perhaps warmer terms, and with more sincerity, to Russia. He there said that Austria could not take any decided step as yet, from being fettered by the treaty of 14th March 1812, the danger of a war with France, and the incompleteness of their preparations; but implied that, in the event of the Allies acceding to the terms proposed, Austria would, if they were refused by France, join her forces to those of the Coalition. This was accompanied by a letter from the King of Saxony to Thielman, desiring him to keep the gates of Torgau shut against both the contending parties. In reality there was nothing in this despatch of Stackelberg which revealed anything more than a desire on the part of Metternich to act to Russia, equally as France, in the real character of a mediator; but Napoleon had never thought they would *really* act up to that character. He had hitherto clung to the idea that, when matters came to a crisis, the Emperor of Austria would remain faithful to the family alliance. He expressed himself accordingly to those around him in terms of such extreme indignation against the "traitors," as he styled them, who had betrayed him, that the universal belief was that no pacific relations with the Cabinet of Vienna would long be practicable. So strongly was he impressed with the idea that Austria was no longer to be trusted, that he resolved to adopt what had all along been the advice of Talleyrand and Cambacères, and address himself on the subject of a pacification directly to the Emperor of Russia, putting Austria entirely aside.[1]

[1] Thiers, xv. 521-524; Fain, i. 178.

51. Napoleon's change of plan in consequence of this discovery.

Full of this project, he adopted a plan which was the basis of all his operations for the remainder of this eventful year. This was, by one means or another, to prolong the war or the negotiation till his reserve armaments were in readiness and had come up into line, which he estimated at 200,000 men, and who, in addition to the

300,000 which he had already in the field or soon to join, would form a mass of half-a-million of combatants, at the head of whom, from Dresden as a central point, he would be in a situation to dictate the terms of peace at once to Vienna, Berlin, and St Petersburg. Having adopted this plan, he commenced a series of despatches to M. de Narbonne, at Vienna, prescribing an entirely different course of conduct from that which he had hitherto pursued. The tenor of all these despatches was to use the most conciliatory language to Austria, to feign entire satisfaction at her professions, to admit, in Metternich's words, that the treaty of 1812 was no longer applicable to existing circumstances, and, so far from denying the extent of the armaments of France, to admit them to their full extent, and give, if desired, their exact amount.[1]

[1] Napoleon to Narbonne, May 12, 1813; Thiers, xv. 526, 527.

52. Napoleon's immense preparations for the prosecution of the war.

Having thus taken his resolution to throw off Austria, and, if he could not come to a direct understanding with Russia, to prosecute the war with the utmost vigour, Napoleon, in every quarter, commenced the most gigantic preparations. His first step was to send for his step-son, Eugene Beauharnais, whom he thanked for his fidelity and fortitude in the command of the army during the last stages of the Russian retreat, and announced that he was about to prove his gratitude by a splendid settlement, that of the Duchy of Galicia, on his daughter, the publication of which would immediately appear in the *Moniteur*. After this preface, he stated that he was about to send him on a special mission to Italy, the object of which was that he should immediately take the command, not only of his own viceroyalty of Lombardy, but of Piedmont and Tuscany, and from the whole united raise a powerful army, the elements or skeletons of which already existed in those provinces. With regard to Murat, he had more difficulty, for that brave and chivalrous, but weak and vacillating prince, had had his vanity profoundly mortified by some lines inserted in the *Moniteur* in regard to

CHAP. VIII. 1813.

his incapacity to command the army after the Russian retreat, and he had fallen into a state of depression and despair which incapacitated him for any active exertion in a separate command. He therefore recalled him from Naples, whither he had retired, to command the cavalry of the army, and ordered him to put 20,000 of his troops at the disposition of Prince Eugene. "When Austria," said he to Eugene, "shall see 100,000 combatants on the Adige, she will feel that it is for her to make up to us, not us to her."[1]

[1] Napoleon to Eugene, May 13, and May 19, 1813; Thiers, xv. 530, 531.

53. His measures to augment the reserve on the Rhine.

To augment the main central army, on which he had to depend for operations in the field, the French Emperor took equally decisive measures, which were attended with extraordinary success. He recalled sixty skeleton battalions, and as many skeleton squadrons from Spain, which were to be filled up to their full complement by conscripts from the interior, made to converge from all parts of France to the frontier fortress of Mayence. From this source he calculated on getting in two months 70,000 troops. In Westphalia and at Hamburg, from the exertions of Jerome Napoleon and Marshal Davoust, he reckoned on 112 battalions, mustering 90,000 combatants. These, with 28 second battalions, organised at Erfurth by Victor, as many coming up from Bremen under Vandamme, and 10,000 Danes, would form a mass of at least 130,000 sabres and bayonets, of which the command was to be given to Marshal Davoust, and which were intended to operate on the Lower Elbe. Thus he reckoned, in addition to the 300,000 already under his orders in Saxony or on the road to it, on 100,000 in Italy, 70,000 at Mayence, and 130,000 between Magdeburg and Hamburg—in all, 600,000 men. It was with this enormous force that he prepared to avenge the disasters of the Russian campaign, and restore his prestige and ascendancy in Germany, and over Europe.[2] Extraordinary as it may appear, the result proved that these calculations of the French Emperor were by no means overcharged, and

[2] See the Etats de l'Armée, given in Thiers, xv. 331-333.

that the number of men whom, from first to last, he brought up around his standards, rather exceeded than fell short of what he had anticipated.

54. His vast measures for fortifying and strengthening the Elbe.

Not content with these immense preparations, Napoleon gave the most extensive orders, and set on foot the most gigantic works, for the defence of the line of the Elbe. He directed the construction of two additional bridges, one at Dresden itself, and one at Priesnitz, to facilitate the passage of troops; commenced the restoration of the fortifications of Dresden, which had been in a great degree dismantled; directed the construction of *têtes-de-pont* on both banks, and ordered additional works at Torgau, Wittenberg, Dessau, and Hamburg. At the same time he set on foot such vigorous measures for the restoration of his cavalry, in which arm he had as yet been so inferior to the enemy, that he reckoned, within six weeks, on having 16,000 horsemen fully equipped, of which 4000 were those of the Guard, and 3000 those of the King of Saxony, now, by his reconciliation with that monarch, again put at his disposal.[1]

[1] Thiers, xv. 535, 536.

55. Forces of the Allies.

Meantime the Allies were slowly retiring, and in good order, to their chosen battle-field at Bautzen on the Spree, on the Bohemian frontier. The entire force at their disposal on this occasion amounted to only 88,000 men; and of these not more, at the very utmost, than 80,000 could be collected on one field; while, inclusive of the large force of fully 80,000 under Ney at Torgau and Wittenberg, threatening Berlin, Napoleon had 160,000, whom he could assemble on one field of battle. This great disproportion of force was owing to the immense losses which the Russian army had undergone, by fatigue, sickness, and the sword, during a campaign of unexampled activity, which had now continued with scarce any intermission for ten months, which had so reduced their ranks, that few of the battalions mustered more than 250 or 300 bayonets.[2] The French had sustained equal or greater losses; but the difference — and it was a most

[2] Lond. 30, 31; Cathcart, 144.

CHAP. VIII. 1813.

important one—lay here, that the victories of the Allies had drawn them away from their resources and their reinforcements, while the defeats of the French had brought them nearer to theirs.

56. Force and position of the Allies at Bautzen. May 12-16.

On the evening of May 12th, the headquarters of the Allies were at Bautzen. Lord Cathcart and Sir Charles Stewart were in attendance on the sovereigns to whom they respectively were accredited, and, along with Sir Robert Wilson, were present in the whole of the important operations which followed, so that we have the immense advantage of authentic narratives regarding them, from the highest functionaries, entirely worthy of credit, and possessing the best sources of information. Their army was, on the 16th, reinforced by 15,000 Russians, under Barclay de Tolly, who had been let loose by the capitulation of Thorn, but this addition did not do more than make up the loss sustained in the battle of Lützen, and the entire force present under arms did not at the very utmost exceed 80,000 men. Indeed, Sir George Cathcart estimated the effective force of Allied combatants under arms in the field, at 70,000. The Allied sovereigns, after much deliberation, had made choice of a position about two miles in the rear of the line of the Spree, near Bautzen, extending along rising ground, and having the left in the woody recesses of the Bohemian Mountains, where it could not be turned; the right, which was in the plain, was secured by several villages, ponds, and enclosures; while the front was covered by a swampy rivulet fringed by osier and alder trees, affording good cover to light troops, and offering considerable obstacles to the passage of cavalry and artillery. The French Emperor, seeing that the Allies had obviously chosen their ground to make a stand, halted his advance during the 13th and four following days, awaiting the closing up of his corps; and during this interval the Allies strengthened their position in several places by field-works, and repaired and armed an old field-redoubt on the summit of a hill,[1] origin-

1 Lond. 38, 39; Cathcart, 143, 144; Thiers, xv. 542, 543; Odel. i. 94-96; Wilson, ii. 26, 27.

ally constructed by the great Frederick a little before the battle of Hochkirchen.

57. Advance and composition of the French army.

Marshal Macdonald first came up in front of this formidable position, having Oudinot on his right, who rested on the wooded Bohemian hills, forming the support of the Allied left. To the left he was soon supported by Marmont, who again was in line with Bertrand with an Italian and Würtemberg as well as a French division. Napoleon no sooner heard that a general battle was imminent than he ordered up Ney and Lauriston, supported by Reynier from Torgau and Luckau, with orders to move on Hoyerswerda on the flank and rear of the Allied position, with their united force, mustering 60,000 combatants. Victor was left before Wittenberg as a standing menace to Berlin; with that exception, his whole disposable force, including the Old and Young Guard, was directed on Bautzen.[1]

[1] Cathcart, 144; Thiers, xv. 540-543.

58. Napoleon's reception of the Austrian proposals.

Napoleon was just setting out for the army, on the evening of the 16th, when M. Bubna arrived at his headquarters at Dresden, with the proposals of mediation by Austria, and an autograph letter from the Emperor Francis to his son-in-law. The French Emperor received the Austrian envoy in the coldest manner, and broke out into one of his violent fits of passion against what he called the perfidy of the Imperial Court. Without being deterred by these declamations, M. Bubna quietly drew the Emperor's letter to Napoleon from his portfolio and read it entire. This letter, which bore the proof of sincerity on its face, produced a great impression on Napoleon, without, however, altering in one iota his preconceived determination to make no concessions. He listened calmly, however, to the terms suggested, which, to spare his pride, were not stated as conditions which he was to accept, but as suggestions of what his reason might approve. When Bubna was done, he replied that the Grand Duchy of Warsaw had perished at Moscow, so there was no need to say anything on that subject. He professed himself willing, to the surprise of M. de Bubna, to admit deputies from

CHAP. VIII. 1813.

the Spanish insurgents to the conference. He expressed, however, the greatest repugnance to making any concessions which might tend to the restoration or reconstitution of Prussia, alleging it would amount to a reward for perfidy which it was too much to expect from him; objected decidedly to the renunciation of the title of Protector of the Confederation of the Rhine, as a concession which, without making any real change on the balance of power, could be insisted on only for the purpose of humiliating him; and insisted the Hanse towns must be retained till a general peace, to be exchanged against the French colonies in the hands of England. The conference, which lasted two hours, broke up without any definite conclusion being arrived at.[1]

[1] Sir Chas. Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, May 26, 1813; Thiers, xv. 551, 552.

59. Opening of a direct negotiation between France and Russia.

This opening of a pacific intercourse with Austria by no means diverted Napoleon from his main design, which was to open a direct negotiation with the Emperor of Russia. To effect this, he adroitly made use of M. de Bubna, who wrote a letter to Count Stadion, the envoy of Austria to the Russian headquarters, corrected by the Emperor himself, in which he said that the French Emperor, noways intoxicated by his recent success, was willing to agree to a suspension of arms, and a congress at Prague, in order to put a stop to the effusion of blood; and that, with that view, he was ready instantly to send commissioners to the advanced posts to negotiate the terms of a suspension of hostilities. M. de Bubna was so much imposed upon by the apparently pacific disposition of the French Emperor, that he fell at once into the snare, and wrote to M. de Stadion that, to all appearance, the mission proposed by Napoleon would be the forerunner of a general peace. Napoleon announced in this letter, that he was about to make choice of M. de Caulaincourt to be his commissioner at the Russian headquarters, as he knew that he would be agreeable to his Imperial Majesty, and this was done with the full consent of M. de Bubna. Having thus put matters ostensibly in a pacific train both with Austria and Russia,

the French Emperor, having first given the necessary orders for arming and securing the *têtes-de-pont* over the Elbe, and provided accommodation for the immense multitude of wounded who were expected to be refluent on the next few days to the Saxon capital, set out in person, preceded by his Guard, on the evening of the 18th, for Bautzen, where he arrived on the morning of the 19th, and immediately mounted on horseback, and began reconnoitring the enemy's position.[1]

[1] Sir Chas. Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, May 28, 1813, MS.; Thiers, xv. 552-554.

60. Combat of Königswartha, and defeat of the French. May 18.

Before this the Allies had gained an advantage over part of Bertrand's corps in the neighbourhood of Königswartha on the evening of the 18th. How careful soever the French Emperor had been to conceal the march of the left wing under Ney to turn the right flank of the enemy, he had been unable to prevent some accounts of it from reaching the Allied headquarters. Having received this intelligence, and learning that Ney's advanced column under Lauriston, and a division of Bertrand's corps detached to communicate with him from the main army, were not properly supported, they conceived the design of surprising them, which was immediately put in practice, and attended with entire success. For this purpose, a force of 20,000 men, consisting of the corps Barclay de Tolly and D'York, was put under the command of the former general, and set out at nightfall on the 18th. Barclay fell in with Bertrand's detached division, consisting of 9000 Italians, near Königswartha, and after a sharp action totally defeated them, with the loss of 2000 men and six guns, of whom 1000, including three generals of division, were made prisoners. They were only saved from total destruction by the opportune arrival of General Kellermann, son of the Duke of Valmy, with Ney's cavalry, who extricated them by a vigorous charge. At the same time, the remainder of the corps under D'York came into collision with the advanced-guard of Ney, under Lauriston, 20,000 strong, which was advancing near Weissig. A fierce conflict ensued, in which the Prussian cavalry

CHAP. VIII.

1813.

made several brilliant charges, and both parties sustained a loss of nearly 2000 men, without any decisive advantage being gained by either. The combat continued with varied success till eleven at night on the 19th, when Barclay, finding himself decidedly overmatched by the hourly-increasing masses of the enemy, withdrew with his corps to the lines of Bautzen.[1]

[1] Lond. 39, 40; Cathcart, 147, 148; Thiers, xv. 557-559; Odel. i. 108. 109.

61. Description of the field of battle by Sir Charles Stewart.

The French, on the same day, made an attack on the village of Bautzen, occupied by Milaradowitch with 13,000 men, as well as the high ground on its left, but they were gallantly repulsed by the Russians, aided by part of Kleist's corps, which came up to its support. It was not intended, however, to hold the town or the course of the Spree when seriously attacked by the enemy, but only to throw an impediment in the way of his advance. Sir Charles Stewart has left the following graphic description of the ground on which the army was posted, which was in many places extremely strong: "Some commanding heights, on which batteries had been constructed near the village of Teukowitz, separated from the chain of mountains by streams and marshy ground, formed the defence of the left of the position. They were occupied by Wittgenstein's and Milaradowitch's corps of Russians. Beyond, and in front of it, the advanced-guards of these corps occupied several heights, on which batteries had been erected. The line then extended to the right, through villages which were strongly intrenched, crossing at right angles the great roads leading from Bautzen to Hochkirch and Gorlitz; thence in front of the village of Burchwitz, to three or four conical hills of considerable elevation, which rise abruptly, and were crowned with artillery, as was the high ridge of Kreckwitz, which adjoined them. These heights formed the right of the Allied position, which was extremely strong. The ground in the centre was flat and favourable for cavalry, except in a few places where it was intersected by water-courses and marshes. Earthworks, however, had been constructed, to

strengthen this part of the line; and in front of it ran a deep rivulet, which curled round the right of the position. On the extreme right the country was flat and woody, intersected by the roads above mentioned leading towards Silesia and the Oder. Barclay de Tolly, with his Russians, stood here, with his extreme right somewhat thrown back, and D'York's and Kleist's Prussians, in echelon, in reserve, in the form of a semicircle, to guard against a turning by Ney's columns. Blucher's Prussians formed on the heights of Kreckwitz. Then came Wittgenstein's Russians, commanded by Rieffskoi, with Milaradowitch's corps on the left; the Guards, Grenadiers, and whole Russian cavalry were in reserve, in the centre; and Prince Eugene of Würtemberg, with 3000 Russians, was placed on the extreme left, in the wooded hills. The whole line was about four miles in length, and about 80,000 men stood prepared to defend it, with 200 guns."[1]

[1] Sir Chas. Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, May 27, 1813, MS.; Lond. 43, 44.

62. French force, and plan of attack.

On the other side Napoleon, on the morning of the 20th, had assembled 150,000 men, not as yet all in one field, but all intended to take part in the general action which was approaching. Oudinot's corps formed the extreme right, and next him was Macdonald with his corps, both destined to attack the enemy's left. Next to Macdonald were Marmont and Bertrand with their respective corps, which were nearly opposite to the Russian centre. These four corps mustered 72,000 combatants; and the whole Guard under Napoleon in person, 15,000 strong, was in the rear of the centre at a village called Förstgen. These forces were sufficiently formidable, and might be considered as about a match for the 80,000 of the Allies which stood before them. But they were only meant to engage the attention of the enemy, and prevent him from sending succour to his right, where the real attack was to be made by Ney with his own corps, Lauriston's, and Reynier's, in all, 60,000 combatants. Macdonald had the command of his own corps and Oudinot's on the right; the centre was under

CHAP. VIII. 1813.

the command of Soult, who had been summoned by the Emperor to the theatre of German war, and was 55,000 strong, including the Guards and reserve cavalry in the rear. The whole force in front of the Allies, exclusive of Ney's wing, was 87,000 strong, including the Guards and reserve. All these troops were in line in front of Bautzen, opposite to the Allied position, except Ney's corps, which had been, during the preceding night, at Makersdorf, about fifteen miles from the extreme right of the Allies, so that he could not arrive on the ground and deal the decisive blow till late in the evening or early on the following morning.[1]

[1] Lond. 43, 44; Cathcart, 151-153; Thiers, xv. 560, 561; Marmont, v. 104, 105.

63. Commencement of the battle and progress of the French on the Allied left. May 20.

The battle began about noon on the 20th with a vigorous attack by Oudinot on the extreme left of the Allied position on the wooded hills. Milaradowitch had anticipated an attack in this quarter, and strengthened Prince Eugene of Würtemberg, who occupied them by ten battalions of light troops under Ostermann, and some Cossacks and artillery. As these were Russian veterans, the conflict was very warm in this quarter, and for long success was doubtful. At length, however, the French, headed by Oudinot in person, succeeded in scaling the heights of the Tronberg, the highest hill in that quarter, and driving back the Russians to Klein Kunitz. At the same time, heavy columns of attack were formed to the left, on the banks of the Spree, by Macdonald and Marmont, who crossed that river, forcing the stone bridge over it, which was strongly barricaded and obstinately defended. The combat here, too, was long and bloody, and carried on under the immediate eye of Napoleon himself, who was stationed beside a windmill on an eminence on the right of the road leading to Bautzen. In this conflict, which was of several hours' duration, Sir Charles Stewart, with his gallant comrade Sir Robert Wilson, who was constantly by his side, eminently distinguished himself. Gradually, however, Napoleon brought up a decided superiority of force; large bodies of cavalry, infantry, and lancers, in-

cluding those of the Guard, were deployed in front of Bautzen, and heavy columns of infantry were displayed on the esplanade before it, while every rising ground was covered by a numerous and magnificent artillery, which thundered with fatal effect on the masses of Russians and Prussians by which the position was defended. At length, after a desperate struggle, the rampart of Bautzen was forced. Milaradowitch, finding the place enveloped by superior forces, then withdrew, according to his orders, and the town itself was occupied, and the whole line of the Spree, up to the foot of the hills, put in possession of the French.[1] *

[1] Lond. 44, 45; Cathcart, 156, 157; Marmont, v. 105; Thiers, xv. 560, 561; Wilson, ii. 17, 18.

64. Progress of the action on the Allied right and centre.

While this bloody conflict was going on on the French right, Kleist, on their left centre, had a still ruder shock to sustain. Bertrand's corps there came into action

* "I had scarcely finished my letters, when a heavy cannonade on the right mounted Sir Charles Stewart, James, and myself. We rode forward and found that Barclay was vigorously attacked on the right, and that the action was commencing near Bautzen. When we arrived there, which we did, as the French would say, *ventre à terre*, we found the left of our line in a warm fire, and that the enemy was passing the Spree on the right of Bautzen, to take the town in reverse, and act in the rear of Milaradowitch. . . . In a few moments the enemy appeared on this side the river, and drove back rapidly all the tirailleurs, &c., who opposed. Not an instant was to be lost. The point was the key of the position of the advanced-guard, and the most prejudicial results must have been the consequence of its premature occupation. Sir Charles [Stewart] agreed with my opinion. I brought back the guns and the retiring battalion. We then advanced at the head, caps in hand, and accompanied with loud cheers. The enemy fell back, but again we were obliged to retire, by fresh succours sustaining the fugitives. Again and again we rallied and charged; and, finding about forty Prussian lancers, we dashed in among the enemy's infantry, while our own pressed forward to help our inferiority. The enemy threw their fire upon us before they gave way, and in flying singed us; but we were revenged. It was my lot to strike the arms out of three men's hands; one at the level, whom a Russian yager instantly stabbed with the bayonet. A few were spared—a good many taken; and if we could have procured but one squadron, I would have engaged for at least five hundred prisoners. The importance of the success was not, however, to be measured by the numbers slain or taken. It was the preservation of the ground that was of chief moment; and that was saved until Kleist was enabled to reinforce the point with guns, infantry, and cavalry: here he gloriously maintained himself for some hours against all the enemy's multiplied and powerful attempts to batter and storm him from the post. It was hot work: little more than pistol-shot distance for near two hours; and, considering that we were conspicuous *à cheval*, and in glittering kits, it is wonderful that no marksman fired with unerring aim; but this is another proof that 'every bullet has its billet.'"—WILSON'S *Private Diary*, ii. 17, 18.

CHAP. VIII. 1813.

in the afternoon, and commenced a furious attack on Kleist's Prussians in front, while Marmont, who had passed Bautzen and established himself in the centre of the Allied line, took them in flank. The Prussians made a gallant resistance; but Marmont's flank attack at length became so formidable that he deemed it necessary to retire, which he did in the best order, to the second and strongest line of defence. Thus the French had made themselves master of the whole of the Allied front line; but, on the other hand, they had retired, according to the preconcerted plan, to the line in rear, which possessed still greater advantages for defence, without any loss either in guns or prisoners.[1]

[1] Lond. 45, 46; Cathcart, 157, 158; Thiers, xv. 562, 563; Marmont, v. 105, 106; Wilson, ii. 25.

65. Renewal of the battle on the day following.

At daybreak on the following morning the Emperor of Russia and King of Prussia were on horseback and in the field accompanied by their respective staffs and diplomatic attendants. Napoleon was equally early astir; and the two imperial and royal suites were within cannon-shot of each other. Presently a loud rattle broke out in the wooded heights on the Allied left, and vast volumes of white smoke were seen rising out of the ravines by which they were intersected, over the black pines which clothed the overhanging heights. It was Oudinot, whose corps, preceded by a cloud of tirailleurs, was renewing the conflict on the ground which had been so obstinately contested on the preceding day. The cannonade soon became extremely warm along the whole line, and the Emperor of Russia and King of Prussia, as they rode with their suites along the whole line, had to endure a very heavy fire of artillery which was directed against them. Three Russian battalions of grenadiers, since made Guards for their bravery on this day, were brought forward in line with as much regularity as the broken ground would permit, and they succeeded, by their steady valour, in driving back the enemy to a considerable distance on the left, and maintained their ground during the whole day against

very superior numbers. An attack was at the same time made on Blucher's position in the village of Kreckwitz and the heights behind it, which were most obstinately defended by the Prussians in the centre. But these efforts were all of a secondary nature, and intended only to engage the attention of the enemy in these quarters, and prevent them from sending succour to the extreme right of the Allies, where Barclay de Tolly was now beginning to feel the pressure of the overwhelming force under Ney.[1]

[1] Sir Chas. Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, June 1, 1813, MS.; Lond. 45; Cathcart, 162; Thiers, xv. 546-565.

66. Decisive attack of Ney with the French left wing on the Allied right.

In effect, the three corps constituting the French left wing under that Marshal had begun early in the morning to cross the Spree at Klix, and were pressing round the extreme right of the Allies with irresistible force. Barclay, whose entire force did not exceed 15,000, kept them in check, and delayed their advance as long as possible; but towards ten o'clock Lauriston and Reynier's corps came up in such strength, that it became impossible for him to maintain his ground any longer. He was constrained, therefore, to fall back, which he did, contending every inch of ground, and at length concentrated his force in a strong position on the extreme right, resting on some heights to the right of Wurschen. There he held the assailants for a considerable time in check; but Ney, having at length got his whole force of 60,000 men, moved forward about eleven o'clock, and carried the village of Preititz by storm. Barclay de Tolly was by this success put into the greatest peril, being almost enveloped by an enemy's force four times his own. Nor was this the whole extent of the danger; Blucher's Prussians were grouped together with a formidable artillery on three conical hills in front of Kreckwitz, and he was obviously prepared to defend himself to the last extremity; but Ney's advance, which was made agreeably to his orders upon the steeple of Hochkirch, was now bringing him directly in the rear of the Prussian general, who, if he persisted in maintaining his position on the heights, as,

CHAP. VIII. 1813.

from his indomitable courage, there was every probability of his doing, would also run the most imminent risk of being surrounded; for to aid Ney's movement, Bertrand's corps moved against him in front, while Marmont's, taking ground to his left, threatened him in flank. Sensible of the danger, Blucher directed some of Kleist's battalions and two of the Prussian Guard upon Preititz, who regained the village, and thus cleared his rear. But Ney brought up fresh troops, and again made himself master of it, thus closing the rear.[1]

1 Lond. 45; Cathcart, 163, 164; Marmont, v. 106, 107; Thiers, xv. 574, 575.

67. Final and decisive attack of Ney and Marmont upon Blucher.

Napoleon no sooner heard the sound of Ney's guns in rear of Kreckwitz, thus menacing the rear of Blucher, than he ordered a general attack on the Prussian general in the centre. For this purpose he put under Marmont's command, in addition to his own formidable guns, the whole artillery of the Guard. With their united batteries, numbering one hundred and twenty pieces, "I opened upon them a fire," says Marmont, "which made the very earth tremble." Under cover of this tremendous fire Bertrand's corps advanced to the attack of the fortified heights; upon which Blucher, disdaining the shelter of his works, sent his cavalry against them, who, charging, forced the French to form squares, and thus arrested their advance. Blucher, however, finding himself assailed on one side by Marmont and Bertrand, and on the other by part of Ney's corps, sent the most urgent messages to the headquarters for reinforcements to enable him to hold his ground. The only answer that he received was, that the reserves were all already engaged, that Preititz was again lost, and that unless he immediately retreated he would be made prisoner. With a heavy heart the veteran marshal was compelled to obey, and give orders to his men to evacuate the hills they had so long and valiantly defended. They descended in dark and massy columns, while their guns on the summits continued to thunder with redoubled fury against the enemy, so as to conceal the movement.[2] In the course of retiring they passed

2 Sir Chas. Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, June 1, 1813, MS.; Thiers, xv. 576, 577; Cathcart, 164, 166; Marmont, v. 107; Odel. i. 124, 127; Wilson, ii. 18.

close by the village of Preititz, in possession of Ney's troops, without being disquieted by them; and the Allied sovereigns, seeing their right decisively turned, and too happy to escape without further loss in such critical circumstances, gave orders to fall back at all points. The retreat, covered by the numerous and magnificent cavalry of the Allies, to which the French had nothing adequate to oppose, was conducted in the best order, and without any loss in guns or prisoners.

68. Napoleon's movements in pursuit of the Allies. May 22.

The day after the battle Napoleon prepared to follow up his success with the utmost vigour, and he deemed himself sufficiently strong to make a considerable detachment in order to electrify Germany and punish Prussia by the capture of Berlin. With this view, when the remainder of the army marched on in pursuit of the Grand Army of the Allies, he left behind Oudinot's corps, which had suffered most in the battle, with orders, after a repose of a few days, to move on the Prussian capital. To this corps he added eight battalions drawn from Magdeburg, and a thousand horse from Dresden, making altogether a force of 24,000 men, which he deemed adequate to the important object he had in view. Meanwhile, without giving his troops an hour of rest, he prepared to follow the main army of the Allies in person. Lauriston and Reynier, whose corps had suffered least in the battle of the preceding day, were in advance; after them came Ney, Marmont, Bertrand, and Macdonald; after which followed the Guard, horse and foot. Deducting the losses in the battle, and the separation of Oudinot, he had still 135,000 men under his immediate command, which would be raised to 150,000 by the closing up of Victor from the rear, who was daily expected—a force considerably more than double that which remained to the Allies.[1]

[1] Odel. i. 134-136; Thiers, xv. 582, 583; Lond. 45, 46.

69. Sir Charles Stewart's description of the retreat.

"The dauntless personal courage of the Emperor Alexander and the King of Prussia," says Sir Charles Stewart, who was by their side during the whole battle, "who never quitted the field, made the greatest impression on

CHAP. VIII. 1813.

all around them; and had not reasons of importance, coupled with prudential considerations, prompted them to relinquish their ground, the most ardent and anxious desire was evinced by them, by renewed attacks, to maintain the position. It is very difficult for an observer, unacquainted with much of the detail, to do justice by description to this battle, and the extraordinary efforts made on the occasion. The determination, however, having been taken to put the army in a new position, the troops moved off, about seven o'clock in the evening, for the ground around Weissenberg. The enemy immediately opened a tremendous fire from the heights of Kreckwitz and the village of Cannewitz on the retiring columns; but every gun was withdrawn from the batteries, and the troops retired as on a field-day. The corps of Barclay, D'York, Blucher, and Kleist, marched off from their right to Weissenberg; those of Wittgenstein and Milaradowitch by their left to Hochkirch. The retreat was made in echelon, covered by the cavalry, and conducted in the most perfect order. Kleist's corps formed the rearguard of the corps moving on Weissenberg, and a battery of forty pieces of cannon, placed by Count Wittgenstein on the heights of Wurzen, checked the enemy's advance. Milaradowitch covered the retreat on the line of Hochkirch. Wittgenstein on all occasions displayed great personal courage; but he did not possess the general confidence of the Russian army, perhaps because he was not a Russian. 'While Kutusoff was living,' said they, 'there was a great and scientific mind to guide the whole; but the talents of the new chief are not yet made manifest; and no implicit reliance can be placed on the great directing power.'"[1]

[1] Sir Chas. Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, June 1, 1813, MS.

70. Combats during the retreat.

The Allied army continued its retreat on the 22d, in two columns, on the great road to Buntzlau and Lowenberg. About noon the rearguard took a position at the entrance of the defile of Reichenbach, to gain time for the carriages to defile, and defended it with obstinacy and

success for some hours, when, the object having been gained, the retreat was continued in the best order towards Görlitz. Napoleon, with the vigour of twenty-five, directed the movements in person, and General Bruyères, an excellent cavalry officer, and old fellow-soldier of the Emperor in Italy, was killed by his side. A desperate cavalry action took place in the plains beyond Reichenbach with various success, which began by a charge headed by Lefebvre Desnouettes at the head of the Polish lancers and the red lancers of the Guard, and ere long became so general that the whole 12,000 cavalry of Latour Maubourg were engaged. A mournful tragedy occurred in Napoleon's staff soon after witnessing one of these charges under a heavy fire of cannon-shot, which must be given in the words of one, and not the least distinguished, of the survivors on the occasion.[1]

[1] Lond. 50, 51; Cathcart, 168, 169; Thiers, xv. 582, 583.

"Bruyères," says Marmont, "had just been killed when I was standing speaking to Duroc, Duke of Friuli, with whom I was intimately acquainted, when I observed that his countenance exhibited a melancholy expression, which I had never before witnessed. The event which immediately followed has engraven the whole particulars on my memory, and almost makes one believe in the truth of presentiment. Duroc, sad and preoccupied, bore a mournful expression in his whole figure. I moved along sometimes speaking to him, and he said, 'My friend the Emperor is insatiable for fighting; we shall all find our graves here; that is our destiny.' Caulaincourt, who was riding beside him, nodded assent. 'He has had victory after reverses; now is the time to make peace,' continued Duroc; 'but he is not changed; he is insatiable for battles; the end of this can be nothing but disaster.' After in vain endeavouring to combat these melancholy ideas, I went to receive the Emperor's orders, who directed me to encamp my corps on the east of the ridge which we had just passed. Napoleon, after arriving in the village of Makersdorf, was

71. Death of Duroc.

CHAP. VIII. 1813.

riding through a hollow way, when a cry was heard, 'Kirgener is dead!' Hearing these words, Napoleon exclaimed, 'Fortune is determined to have much from us to-day.' Hardly were these words out, when a second cry arose, 'Duroc is dead!' 'That is not possible,' said Napoleon; 'I was speaking to him this moment.' Unhappily, it was not only possible, but true. A cannon-shot, discharged from a great distance, had struck a tree near Napoleon, and, starting off, killed successively Kirgener, an excellent officer of engineers, and Duroc, the grand-chamberlain of the palace. The first was struck dead on the spot; for the second was reserved a more melancholy end, for he was struck in the body, and his entrails protruded out. It was evident that the wound was mortal; but the dying warrior was put on a litter, and wrapped in cloths steeped in opium, to lessen the agony which he endured."[1]

[1] Marmont, v. 109, 110; Thiers, xv. 583, 584; Odel. i. 147-149.

72. Napoleon's last conversation with him.

Napoleon was profoundly afflicted by this catastrophe, which threatened to cut off one of his earliest companions in arms, and one of the most esteemed and upright officers of his palace. He hastened to the hovel to which, as the nearest shelter, he had been carried. He took him kindly by the hand, and, pressing it warmly, said, "My friend, there is another world, where we shall meet again, and find the term of our toils!' With a voice scarce audible from emotion, Duroc answered, "From the bottom of my heart, I thank you; I intrust to you my only child, a daughter, whom you will protect. May you live long to conquer the enemies of France, and repose at length in a necessary peace. As for myself, I have lived as a man of honour, I die the death of a soldier; I have nothing to reproach myself with. I again commend my daughter to your care." Then seeing Napoleon still lingered, holding his hand, he said, "Withdraw, Sire, withdraw! This spectacle is too painful for you."[2] Napoleon rose up and withdrew, saying, "Adieu, my friend; we shall see each other again, it may be ere

[2] Odel. i. 98, 99; Marmont, v. 116; Thiers, xv. 584, 585.

long." In a short time after he expired. "Death," said he to Marmont, "has no terrors for me, if I suffered less agony."[1]

73. Continuation of the retreat, and combat at Haynau. May 26.

After this catastrophe, the retreat was continued in two columns, the one by Buntylau, Haynau, and Leignitz, the other by Lauban, Lowenberg, and Jauer, upon the well-known fortress of Schweidnitz, in Upper Silesia. The baggage, which was of enormous extent, preceded the columns, and the artillery and cavalry closed the march in such strength, that no loss in equipage or materiel was sustained. At Haynau, on the 26th, Blucher, who commanded the rearguard, conceived and executed one of the most brilliant strokes with cavalry which modern times have witnessed, since the invention of fire-arms deprived that arm of much of its former importance. Sir Charles Stewart, who was engaged in it, gave the following account of this operation: "The Prussian general withdrew the rearguard through the defile of Haynau, but still defended the entrance of the village by the tirailleurs of the rearguard. While a warm fire was going on between them and the advanced-guard of the enemy, he skilfully drew up five regiments of horse behind the village of Baudmansdorf, in ambuscade, entirely concealed from the enemy. They were formed obliquely to the line of retreat of the main column, but very near it. When all was ready, the infantry, consisting of three battalions which had been left in the village, retired through it, and after retreating some way halted, and faced about in a strong position some miles in the rear, which they made a show of defending with the utmost tenacity. Ney's advanced-guard, which followed, seeing this, deployed, and was advancing to the attack, when, at a preconcerted signal, the burning of a windmill, the cavalry, hitherto hidden, suddenly emerged and bore down upon them. Owing to the eagerness of the troops engaged, the signal was given before the enemy was sufficiently advanced, and thus the success was not so

CHAP. VIII.

1813.

complete as it would otherwise have been. But as it was, the French in advance, who had no time to form square, were ridden through and dispersed in a minute; 1500 prisoners and 13 guns taken, with a loss to the Allies of only 100 men. Unfortunately, Colonel Dolfs, who led this brilliant attack, was killed at the head of his men in the beginning of the charge." M. Thiers adds to this narrative, on which the French and British annalists are entirely agreed, that the troops dispersed were the best of Lauriston's divisions, that of General Maison, and that Ney himself narrowly escaped being made prisoner in the course of the *mêlée*.[1]

[1] Sir Chas. Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, June 1, 1813, MS.; Lond. 51, 52; Cathcart, 170, 171; Thiers, xv. 537, 538.

74. The Allies move towards Bohemia.

This surprise, which gave the utmost displeasure to Napoleon, rendered his troops more cautious, and considerably relaxed the vigour of the pursuit. He conceived that the Allies were retiring on Breslau, and despatched Ney with his corps to anticipate them on that point, and he entered that fortress on the 1st June. A fresh success gained by the Allies on the 27th, in the neighbourhood of Gottesberg, when they made prisoners 500 of the French, contributed still further to retard the movements of the enemy. But the Allied sovereigns had no intention of retiring on Breslau: they had resolved on a flank movement to bring them nearer to the Bohemian frontier. They had made choice of a strong position, having its right resting on Schweidnitz, and its left on the Bohemian Mountains, where they had formed an intrenched camp, which they were prepared to defend to the last extremity. If driven from this position, they were to have retired to the neighbourhood of Neisse, where a second intrenched camp had been prepared. This flank march completely abandoned their communications with the Oder and Poland, and established a new base resting entirely on Austria.[2]

[2] Sir Chas. Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, June 4, 1813, MS.; Lond. 56, 57; Cathcart, 171, 172;

Many cogent reasons now existed which urged both parties to a temporary suspension of arms. The loss on both sides, since hostilities were renewed on the Saxon

plains by the battle of Lützen, had been not less, including the sick and worn-out, than 50,000 men: and each had powerful reinforcements preparing in the rear, which would supply these losses, and render them stronger than ever for the fight. Napoleon rested with confidence on the 300,000 men now forming in reserve in France, Italy, and Germany, which, when arrived in line, would more than double his disposable forces. It was to gain time for the arrival of these immense reinforcements, on which he relied to terminate in his favour the indecision and secure the fidelity of Austria, that all his efforts were directed, and no method seemed so likely to accomplish it as proposing an armistice, and gaining time by the evasions and delay of diplomacy. The Allies had no such gigantic reserve forces to look to; but reasons equally pressing existed to induce them to accede to an armistice. The Prussian levies, though brave and full of enthusiasm, were as yet by no means generally organised, and six weeks or two months would be of the last importance in bringing them into the field. Large reinforcements also were expected at the Russian headquarters, though they could not all arrive before the beginning of August. Fifteen thousand of the Guards, and Sacken's corps, 8000 strong, had reached Kalisch; while Labanoff's corps, between 30,000 and 40,000 strong, was coming up in successive columns. The withdrawal of the blockading corps from before Glogau would raise the Prussian force to 25,000 men. Thus above 70,000 veteran troops might be relied on; which, with the Prussian volunteers and levies, would probably produce, in six weeks, 120,000 or 130,000 fresh troops to reinforce the Grand Army. In the mean time, much was to be gained by a suspension of hostilities, even if it were only for a few weeks, to an army worn out with fatigue and incessant marching or fighting for above a month past, and whose effective numbers did not, at the very utmost, now exceed 60,000 combatants. That the Allied sovereigns

75. Reasons which led both parties at this period to desire an armistice.

CHAP. VIII.

1813.

mainly relied on the eventual co-operation of Austria, was evident from their having abandoned their principal line of communication by Kalisch with the rear: for if Austria declared against them they would be in a *cul-de-sac*, driven up by Napoleon against the hostile Bohemian frontier, from which extrication would have been next to impossible. An event had already occurred which foreshadowed these dangers, for the French had taken eight hundred men, ten guns, and a large quantity of ammunition moving from the Oder towards Liegnitz, and ignorant of the events which had occurred.[1]

[1] Sir Chas. Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, June 4, 1813, MS.; Lond. 55, 56; Cathcart, 172, 173; Thiers, xv. 589-591.

76. Reasons against it; but it is at length concluded.

When so many pressing reasons existed on both sides for a suspension of arms, it may appear surprising that any difficulty should have existed in getting its terms arranged, the more especially when the negotiations which had been commenced before the battles are taken into consideration. But it fell out otherwise, and a war *à toute outrance* was on the point of breaking out when the chiefs of both parties were desirous of an accommodation. The reason was, that the Prussian officers—at the head of whom was General Gneisenau, who had succeeded General Scharnhorst as chief of the staff, and who was a man of great ability and an ardent turn of mind—anticipated the most serious dangers from the conclusion of an armistice, which they feared, not without some reason, might terminate in their being left exposed to the whole wrath of the French Emperor, while Russia, whose honour was vindicated and independence secured, withdrew from a burdensome strife in which she no longer was vitally concerned. It was known at the Prussian headquarters that Napoleon had made overtures to the Emperor for a separate peace, and it was feared a suspension of hostilities would lead to their being renewed and possibly accepted. "It is difficult to give," said Sir Charles Stewart at this time, "an adequate idea of the anxiety which prevails with respect to the decision of Austria."[2] The Allied armies have thrown themselves upon her

[2] Sir Chas. Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, May 30, 1813, MS.; Lond. 54, 55; Thiers, xv. 592, 593.

frontiers; they have abandoned their main line of communication by Kalisch; have placed themselves absolutely in a *cul-de-sac;* and if Austria does not declare for them it is easy to see what the result must be. On the other hand, if she declare in their favour, the situation of Buonaparte will be equally critical. Two attempts to treat separately with Russia have, it is said, been made and rejected."

77. An armistice is agreed to by both parties.

The necessity of the case, however, ere long prevailed over these difficulties, and Alexander triumphed over the seductions of Napoleon as he had done over his arms. A return from Wittgenstein of the Russian troops in camp on the 27th showed only 35,000 effective men, and the Prussians 23,000—in all, 58,000; and though large reinforcements were coming up, they could not be in line for some weeks to come. It is no small proof of the constancy and fortitude of the Emperor Alexander, that in these circumstances he faithfully adhered to his engagements with his Allies; and it cannot be doubted that Napoleon never committed a greater fault than in suspending hostilities when his army was flushed with victory, nearly three times the strength of the enemy, and in a position which cut them off from their base, and drove them up against the mountain frontier of Austria. It was determined, therefore, at the Allied headquarters, to send a message with proposals for an armistice to the French headquarters, and at the same time despatch M. de Nesselrode to Vienna to lay before the Austrian Cabinet the perilous predicament of the Allied army, its diminished strength and hazardous position, the impossibility of remaining much longer on the Bohemian frontier, and the imminent risk that, if the Cabinet of Vienna delayed for any length of time to declare itself, the Russians would be compelled to make a forced retreat into Poland, which would infallibly produce the dissolution of the confederacy, the destruction of Prussia, and the loss to Austria of the only chance she might ever have of

CHAP. VIII. 1813.

saving Europe and herself. M. de Nesselrode was further instructed to apprise the Austrian Government that proposals for a separate negotiation had been made to Russia, that the Emperor Alexander had refused as yet to listen to them, but that he might be reluctantly compelled to act otherwise, and that he could do so in a few hours, for he had only to grant an audience to M. de Caulaincourt, who was at the advanced posts soliciting a private interview.[1]

[1] Sir Chas. Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, June 4, 1813; Thiers, xv. 593, 594.

78. Conclusion of an armistice. May 29.

Charged with these momentous despatches, so well calculated to terminate the delays and overcome the apprehensions of the Austrian Cabinet, Count Nesselrode set out on the 29th May for Vienna, and on the same day the Russian general Schouvaloff, and the Prussian general Kleist, were sent to meet M. de Caulaincourt at the advanced posts. Caulaincourt referred them to Berthier, who forthwith informed the Emperor. Napoleon at once consented to the principle of an armistice, for the reason and with the secret designs already explained; but he was desirous to extract as much advantage as he could on his own side from this concession, so obviously beneficial in the first instance to the Allies. He therefore insisted at first that the cessation of hostilities should be at least for two months, and that during all that time the French garrisons in the fortresses on the Oder and the Vistula should be maintained by provisions purchased from the adjacent country. He was willing to extend the armistice from Breslau to Hamburg, but on condition that these towns were ceded to him, whether these towns had or had not been reconquered by the French troops. These terms met with violent resistance from the Russian and Prussian commissioners; and Caulaincourt, who conducted the negotiations on the part of France, confessed that "the feeling of justice supported the Allies under their defeats, and that Napoleon would have a violent struggle to maintain if he persisted in his resolution to yield nothing to Europe."

The Allied commissioners were resolute not to abandon Breslau, become the second capital of the Prussians, or Hamburg, which would be a tacit recognition of its forming part of the territory of France, or to prolong the armistice beyond a month. At length, after a prolonged conference of ten hours, it was found impossible to come to terms, and M. de Caulaincourt was obliged to refer the matter to Napoleon in person, who was at Neumarkt, at the gates of Breslau, but without having yet entered that city.[1]

[1] Thiers, xv. 594, 595; Sir Charles Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, June 6, 1813, MS.

79. Further discussions of Napoleon direct with Austria.

Napoleon was extremely irritated at these demands on the part of the Allied commissioners, insomuch, that at first it seemed as if the negotiation would be entirely broken off. He replied that a suspension of arms was noway necessary to him; that if it was not agreed to, he would march forward and drive them beyond the Vistula; that nothing would make him abandon Hamburg or the half of Silesia, and that if he consented to let the Allies retain the other half, including Breslau, it was only in order to demonstrate his moderation to Europe after two such victories. In regard to the duration of the armistice, he was determined that it should be at least two months. Matters looked very unpromising from the obstinacy of both parties in maintaining their respective claims, when M. de Bubna returned from Vienna, and gave a much more favourable picture of the disposition of the Cabinet of Austria than could have been previously hoped for. In truth, Metternich and the Emperor Francis were overjoyed at the favourable reports which he had brought of the dispositions of Napoleon, and in particular at his willingness to admit the Spanish insurgents to the conference. They were both sincerely desirous of peace, and beyond anything anxious to escape without drawing the sword. Actuated by these feelings, they had so far modified the proposals formerly submitted to the French Emperor as to postpone the restitution of the Hanse towns, the question of the Confederacy of the Rhine, and

CHAP. VIII. 1813.

that of the maritime rights of neutrals, till the conclusion of a general peace. These new proposals, so well calculated to soothe the pride of Napoleon, and adjourn to a future period all questions likely to irritate it, were accompanied by a second autograph letter conceived in the kindest terms from the Emperor Francis to him, which concluded with these words: "On the day on which I gave you my daughter, your honour became my own. Have trust in me, and I will ask nothing derogatory to your glory." To these assurances, M. de Bubna brought the declaration from Metternich that Austria was bound by treaty to no one, and the official guarantee, that if Napoleon accepted the modified terms now proposed, Austria would renew with him the treaty, offensive and defensive, of 14th March 1812.[1]

[1] Thiers, xv. 597-599.

80. Conclusion of the armistice of Pleswitz. June 4.

These assurances on the part of the Austrian Cabinet were perfectly sincere when made, for when M. de Bubna, who arrived at Liegnitz on 30th May, left Vienna, intelligence had not arrived in that capital of the separate negotiation which the French Emperor was endeavouring to open with the Emperor of Russia. Napoleon, without a moment's delay, was informed of these proposals on the part of Austria, by Maret, to whom they had been communicated by M. de Bubna. The information reached him on the 2d June, and he immediately resolved, in consequence, to make some concessions, in order to obtain the delay of at least seven weeks, for which he was so anxious, thinking himself now secure at their expiration of the co-operation of Austria. Information at the same time arrived, that Davoust was at the gates of Hamburg, and would certainly be in possession of it before the night of 1st June. This gave him the means of resolving the question of demarcation on the principle of *Uti possedetis*, and he accordingly inserted a clause, fixing the line in the Hanse towns at what the fate of arms should have decided on the 3d at midnight. The armistice was to last till the 20th July, with six days more for denouncing

June 2.

it, which in effect brought its duration to within a week of two months. As to Breslau, it was to be included in a neutral territory of twelve leagues square. These terms were despatched by Napoleon on the evening of 3d June to Caulaincourt, with orders, if they were not instantly acceded to, to resume hostilities. At the same time he forwarded a secret letter, in cypher, to M. Maret, at Liegnitz, in which he said: "*Gain time;* do not commit yourself to M. de Bubna; bring him with you to Dresden, and retard as long as possible the time when we must accept or refuse the Austrian terms. I am about to sign the armistice, and when that is done, all the time which we require will have been gained. If, however, they persist in demanding terms unsuitable for my honour, I will furnish you with themes by means of which you may prolong the discussions with M. de Bubna, and secure me the few days necessary to drive the Allies to a distance from the Austrian territories." Thus authorised, the armistice was signed at Pleswitz on the 4th June, on the terms which Napoleon proposed; the Allied commissioners having instructions to yield on other points, provided Breslau did not remain in the hands of the French.[1]

[1] Napoleon to M. Maret, June 3, 1813; Thiers, xv. 600-602; Lond. App. No. III. p. 368.

81. Thiers's reflections on this armistice.

"Such," says M. Thiers, "was this deplorable armistice, which it was certainly right to accept if peace was intended, but which should have been absolutely rejected if war was to be continued; for Napoleon, at the time he agreed to it, had it in his power to destroy the Allies. So far, however, from agreeing to it because he wished for peace, he desired it to gain two months to complete his armaments, and to be in a situation to refuse the conditions of Austria. This fault, which preceded so many others, was a part of those extravagantly ambitious projects which precipitated the close of his career. It occasioned, however, in all but Prussia, a general joy, because it was thought to be the harbinger of a general peace. Napoleon, in sending his troops into cantonments, decreed

CHAP. VIII. 1813.

the formation of a colossal monument on the summit of Mont Cenis," to commemorate the generous efforts of the French and Italian people who ran to arms in 1813 to resist the Coalition. "The idea bore the impress of his genius; but for his own sake, for that of the French people, it would have been better to have sent to Paris a treaty abandoning the Confederation of the Rhine, Hamburg, Illyria, and Spain, with the inscription 'The sacrifices of Napoleon to the French people.'"[1]

[1] Thiers, xv. 603.

82. Review of the Allied army.

A review of the Allied army took place during the retreat, on the 27th May, at Jauer. The corps which passed before the Emperor Alexander presented huge gaps, though reinforcements had come up from the rear since the battle of Bautzen, which in some degree compensated the chasms made in the ranks on that bloody day. The Russians in the whole army, indeed, were only 35,000; a melancholy proof of the vast ravages which war, fatigue, and the sword had made in the once colossal forces of the Czar. These were, however, bronzed veterans, inured to war, cool under fire, patient of fatigue, enduring of suffering, steady beyond any others in Europe in disaster, but without the fire or dash of the French or Prussian soldiers. The Prussians, though in many cases yet unsteady in the ranks, and scarcely masters of military discipline, exhibited the fire and ardour which shone forth so conspicuously in the actions which followed, and which mainly contributed to the glorious termination of the war.[2]

[2] Sir Chas. Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, June 7, 1813, MS.; Lond. 61.

83. Honour conferred on Sir R. Wilson.

"On this occasion," says Sir Charles Stewart, "a distinguished honour was conferred upon a most meritorious officer in front of the camp of Jauer." The Emperor ordered a grand review of the troops in camp. His Majesty rode along the line, and was received with enthusiasm by the soldiers. Observing a favourable moment, when he was surrounded by his generals and staff officers, and in front of the troops, his Imperial Majesty called Sir Robert Wilson to him, and addressed him in the following gracious

speech: "Sir Robert Wilson, I have duly appreciated the services, gallantry, and zeal, which have distinguished you throughout the war; in testimony of which I have determined to confer upon you the third class of the order of St George." So saying, as if desirous of doing it in the most gratifying manner, the Emperor directed General Augerausky to take his cross from his neck, and delivered it to Sir Robert Wilson. Then turning to Sir Charles Stewart, while General Augerausky gave him the cross and ribbon, he said: "General, I give this to Sir Robert Wilson, for a long series of distinguished services through the campaign, through the war." The Emperor continued some time to speak in the same strain, with his hand on Sir Robert's shoulder. "Sir Charles Stewart," says Sir Robert Wilson, "behaved most generously and kindly on this occasion, saying all that could be said, and perhaps exaggerating my merits." He lost no time in transmitting to the Foreign Office a full account of this interesting scene, in duplicate of a letter addressed to Lord Cathcart.* "The gracious mode, the well-chosen moment, and the pride experienced by a British officer, in seeing one of his companions in arms thus decorated in front of the Imperial army, justify me in recording this incident in detail."[1] If it was a grateful task to Sir Charles Stewart to witness the honour bestowed on a noble fellow-soldier, it is not less pleasing to his biographer to record the generous enthusiasm which led him to speak in such terms of a worthy companion in arms, but a most determined political opponent.

[1] Lond. 52, 53; Sir R. Wilson's Diary, ii. 33, 34.

* See Sir C. Stewart *to* Lord Cathcart, *May* 27, 1813; Wilson's *Diary*, i. 458.

CHAPTER IX.

ARMISTICE OF PLESWITZ. JUNE 4—AUGUST 18, 1813.

CHAP. IX.

1813.

Vast importance of the matters treated at the Congress of Prague.

REMARKABLE beyond any other in European history, from the magnitude of the interests which came under its discussion, and the vast consequences which followed from its determinations, the Congress which met at Prague, after the armistice signed on the 4th June at Pleswitz, was distinguished by the great military and diplomatic ability to which the management of these vast concerns was intrusted. The genius and profound dissimulation of Napoleon was there met by the cautious prudence of Metternich and the indomitable resolution of Castlereagh; the moral firmness of Caulaincourt and diplomatic skill of Maret, were matched against the ardent patriotism of Hardenberg and the disguised ambition of Nesselrode. The British minister was not personally present at the deliberations, but he was admirably represented by Lord Cathcart and Sir Charles Stewart, who were fully in his confidence, and communicated to the Allied Plenipotentiaries the impress of his resolution. The interests at stake were nothing less than these—the permanent enslaving, or the immediate emancipation of Europe; and in the decision of that all-important question, Austria possessed a preponderating, it may be said a decisive, influence. For, if her forces were added to those of Napoleon, and the great central bastion of Bohemia put into his hands, no one could doubt that his military means, already victorious in two great battles, would

prevail in the strife; and, on the other hand, if the Cabinet of Vienna joined their armies to those of the Allies, there was a fair prospect of reducing the formidable numerical superiority to which his recent successes had been owing, and at length driving his legions across the Rhine.

2. Sincerity of Austria, and her views.

Austria was perfectly sincere in this great debate; for she was actuated by the most pressing and imperious of all passions—that of fear. She had suffered so much from France in preceding wars that she was naturally desirous of turning the present crisis as much as could be to her own advantage, and, if possible, regaining some part of the territory which she had lost in these disastrous contests. But she was anxious to do this without drawing the sword. She wished to take advantage of her situation as armed mediator, and in a manner umpire, between the contending parties; but she was by no means prepared to take an active part in hostilities. She had still an undefined dread of the awful power from whom she had suffered so much, and of the conqueror whose victorious sword had struck so deep into her vitals. Add to this that her preparations for war were in so incomplete a state that a war with Napoleon would be attended with very great hazard.[1]

[1] Cathcart, i. 177.

3. Forces of Russia and Prussia.

The forces which Russia and Prussia could bring into the field did not exceed 80,000 men; and although as many more were engaged in the blockade of fortresses on the Elbe and the Oder, yet they were fully engaged where they were, and were for the most part landwehr, who could not be relied on for operations in the open field. Bernadotte had 20,000 on the Lower Elbe but they would be quite occupied with the troops of Davoust in Hamburg, while Bulow's 12,000 Prussians in the neighbourhood of Berlin were absolutely required for the defence of that capital against the threatened attack of Marshal Oudinot from the side of Luckau. Thus the Allies, even including the whole disposable forces of

CHAP. IX. 1813.

Austria, could not, at the very utmost, bring more than 170,000 men at once into the field to oppose 300,000 whom Napoleon would shortly have under his banner, and as many more on whom he could rely if his much-wished-for delay of two months were obtained. It was hazardous in such circumstances to precipitate immediate hostilities, for the Allies would in that case be at once met by a superiority of nearly two to one; but it became still more so to delay them for a considerable period, for in that time the superiority might be expected to be not less than three to one.

4. Great advantages which this state of affairs gave to Napoleon.

This state of affairs presented singular advantages to a chief possessed of the sagacity and decision which characterised Napoleon. In addition to the ordinary and well-known superiority which a *single* powerful sovereign has in negotiating with a coalition of separate cabinets, actuated by individual and often discordant interests, he enjoyed this peculiar and decisive advantage, that he was not only superior in force to all united, but immeasurably so to any one when taken separately. It was universally felt that the Coalition could only make head against the French Emperor by holding together; but it was by no means equally clear that they *would hold together*, or all remain proof against the powerful means of seduction which he had it in his power to apply to each. It was already known that he had made offer to Austria of the whole province of Silesia as the price of her co-operation, and it was by no means certain that her Cabinet would resist the temptation of regaining that ancient and valuable province, the more especially when the family alliance of the two imperial houses, and the backward state of her present military armaments, was taken into consideration. To Russia he had likewise made overtures for a separate peace; and it lay with the Emperor Alexander at once to terminate a bloody and exhausting war, in which he had no longer a direct interest, by a glorious and lasting peace. The sincerity and ardour of Prussia in the cause could

not for a moment be doubted, and everything which heroism and patriotic ardour could effect might confidently be anticipated from its loyal and suffering inhabitants; but its military resources, drawn now from not more than five millions of inhabitants, were evidently unequal to a contest, single-handed, with a power wielding those of eighty millions, if the Confederation of the Rhine and Italy is taken into consideration. Bernadotte could, as a matter of course, draw off his forces, and take shelter in his remote peninsula the moment the Coalition was dissolved; and the army of England was too deeply engaged in the Peninsular contest to be in a situation to offer any but an indirect aid to any contest in Northern Europe.*

5. Lord Castlereagh's view of the alliance.

Deeply impressed with these considerations, and well aware that none of the powers in Europe were capable of making head against France in its present powerful military state of organisation singly, Lord Castlereagh directed his main attention to holding together the often disunited members of the Coalition. Prussia had for ten years looked on with indifference while Austria maintained the contest. Austria did the same when she was engaged; and both those powers joined their forces to those of Napoleon

* Lord Castlereagh's anxiety on the subject of the Alliance holding together, and on the line Austria was to take, had by the end of June become extreme. On the 22d June he wrote to Sir Charles Stewart—"We are in great anxiety to hear from you upon the armistice. Its extension to the 20th July puzzles and alarms us for the temper of Austria. We have done everything to prevail upon the Prince Royal to manage matters with *your parties*, and I trust all may be arranged before the resumption of hostilities." And again, on the 30th June, he wrote to Lord Cathcart—"In the present wavering state of Austrian politics, I have deemed it advisable to direct your Lordship to endeavour to bring the Court of Vienna to a private explanation of its views. It is not for Great Britain to goad other powers into exertions which they deem inconsistent with their own safety; but it is material we should know on what we have to reckon, as well as to evince the disposition we feel, as far as our means will permit, to sustain the Continental powers in accomplishing their own, as well as the general safety; and as a proof that such is our disposition towards Austria, your Lordship is authorised to make them an advance, if actually *en lutte* against France. The rapid progress of the British arms in Spain will, I trust, prove that we are not disposed to be inactive, and that it is not by pecuniary efforts alone that we are ready to contend for a better order of things."—*Castlereagh Correspondence*, viii. 408, 411.

CHAP. IX. 1813.

when Russia was attacked by a gigantic crusade of Western Europe. In truth it might be said that Napoleon had conquered Europe by means of Europe itself—that he had caused its rulers to forge their own chains. All this Lord Castlereagh clearly saw, and his correspondence discovers the constant presence of it to his mind. But it was a very different matter to carry it practically into execution, and still those jealousies, so much inflamed by recent disasters, arising from the abandonment of those principles in a great and unwieldy coalition. This was the more difficult in this instance, as England, however deeply interested in the issue, was not directly represented by any member of the Congress, which was carried on exclusively by the representatives of Austria, Russia, Prussia, and France.

6. Importance of Bernadotte to the alliance.

In one quarter, however, Great Britain did exercise a more direct influence on the alliance, and Sir Charles Stewart was the representative by whom her power was there wielded. Though not a first-rate power in the Coalition, and having contributed little as yet to the accomplishment of its views, Sweden was an important link in its composition, and might come to exercise a material influence on its fortunes. The Swedish soldiers, though not numerous, were second to none in Europe in valour and steadiness, and had more than once interposed with decisive effect in the most important wars in Germany. The military chief who had been elected by the National Diet to succeed on the demise of the present sovereign, was not only possessed of distinguished abilities in war, but he openly aspired to the command of the army on the Lower Elbe, which was to be charged with the defence of Berlin, and which it was proposed to raise to 80,000 combatants. Add to this, that the attitude of Sweden during the crisis could not fail to exercise a material influence on that of Denmark, hitherto the firm ally of France, but which, shaken by the catastrophe of 1812, and in terror of Russia, had recently made advances, showing a

disposition on fair terms to join the alliance against Napoleon.*

Bernadotte's language and actions were not a little equivocal, and such as begat natural and well-founded suspicions, in appearance at least, of his sincerity. Towards the Emperor Alexander his confidential letters were in the highest degree not only attached but adulatory, and it was difficult to doubt their sincerity, as it mainly depended on that autocrat whether he was to obtain the important addition of Norway to his dominion.† His talents, both for action and composition, were

7. His equivocal attitude towards the Allies.

* On March 23, 1813, Lord Castlereagh addressed the following letter to the Prince Royal of Sweden:—"General Hope has conveyed to me the substance of the many interesting conversations he has had with your Royal Highness. He has further flattered me by repeating the gracious notice your Royal Highness was pleased to take of my endeavours to unite the councils and interests of our respective states. I trust the auspicious prospect which awaits your Royal Highness's approaching operations may enable me, in the discharge of my public duties, more intimately to cultivate your Royal Highness's confidence, and to secure your esteem. My first wish is to see your Royal Highness at the head of a powerful army, liberated from all the embarrassments of a first landing, and enabled, without the necessity of losing much precious time in securing your rear, to take that prominent part in the advanced operations of the Allied armies to which your name and service in the expectation of Europe at this moment destine you. The magnificent career of the Russian troops, sweeping everything before them, in the midst of a severe winter, from Moscow to the Elbe, has opened to your Royal Highness new facilities. The combinations required to assemble your army from distant points may now, I trust, be brought within narrow limits, and the Russian auxiliary force be saved the inconvenience of a re-embarkation. If Denmark should still refuse to accommodate to the general interests (which I think now possible), I trust your Royal Highness will soon extinguish that portion of her military resources which is to be found in her Continental provinces, and which can alone, while Zealand is blockaded, give any cause for jealousy to your movements. I shall deeply lament this or any other delay which may retard the moment when your operations may assume a more enlarged character. I shall not lose sight of any suggestions which were recommended either by your Royal Highness's wishes or judgment; and when it is not acted upon, you will, I am sure, attribute it to the variety of the many services which now press upon the resources and military force of Great Britain."— LORD CASTLEREAGH *to the* PRINCE ROYAL OF SWEDEN, *March* 23, 1813; *MS. Londonderry Papers.*

† Le Prince Royal de Suède à S. M. I. l'Empereur de Russie:—

"Extrêmement occupé, il m'a été impossible d'écrire de ma main cette longue lettre, mais je ne puis, Sire, résister au plaisir de réitérer à V. M. l'assurance que je désire vivement que les circonstances actuelles jettent les bans d'une union éternelle entre la Russie et la Suède. Il faut venger l'Europe et la sauver. Voilà, Sire! notre vocation. Elle sera remplie. Je l'attends des principes de V. M. et les qualités éminens qui ont fixé sur elle mes premiers regards

CHAP. IX. 1813.

alike remarkable, and none possessed in higher perfection the art, so important to the rulers of men, of carrying away the judgment by a flow of easy and impassioned oratory. Judging from his conversation and the style of his political letters, both public and confidential, there was no man in Europe who was more strongly impressed with the vital importance of the great cause in which they were engaged, and of the absolute necessity of a thorough oblivion of all separate interests, and of a sincere and

et les yeux du monde. Que de vœux, que de soupirs, sont dans ce moment pressés vers le camp Impérial Russe ! V. M. I. n'appartient pas seulement à la Russie mais à l'univers : ce fut le langage que j'ai eu l'honneur de lui tenir il y a des mois ; et articles affaires ont été loin d'être dans l'état on elles se trouvaient alors : maintenant la Prusse fait cause commune avec V. M. I. ; l'Autriche est du moins neutre, et l'Allemagne nous appele, elle s'arme, nous attend et nous conjure de rester unis. Agréez, Sire ! mes vœux et mes sentimens pour tout ce qui vous intéresse. (Signé) CHARLES JEAN."

Enclosed in the preceding :—

"Les grands evènemens qui se précipitont ne vous permettent plus de revenir sur le passé ; que le souvenir d'opinions contraires soit enseveli pour jamais ! Le present nous appartient ; et en fondant une nouvelle époque sur confiance mutuelle il deviendra une gage nouvelle d'un avenir heureux. La nouvelle de l'armistice conclu le 5 de ce mois m'est parvenu hier, et j'attends à chaque moment la copie de cet acte. Quelqu'onéreux qu'il soit, rien est perdu si ce premier pas vers un accommodement avec l'ennemi commun n'est suivi d'un autre plus décisif encore où il pourra cimenter par la plume les avantages qu'il sera acquis par l'épée. La position militaire de l'Empereur Napoléon est trop aventurée pour qu'il ne doive tout tenter en faveur de la paix, et sa tactique est plus active dans les négociations que sur le champ de bataille. La tactique de V. M. I. et celle de S. M. le Roi de Prusse, peut déjouer toutes ces tentatives, et l'Europe peut être encore sauvée si nous parvenons, Sire, à la défense. Déjà V. M. I. a vu l'ancienne capitale de son empire consumée par les flammes au milieu des cohortes ennemies qui étaient venues des bords du Rhin pour le conquérir. En cédant alors aux insinuations pacifiques de l'Empereur Napoléon, V. M. n'aurait apperçu des ruines du Kremlin que l'Europe en fers. Elle resista aux intrigues et aux menaces ; et la Russie fut delivra et les espérances rendues au Continent. Que le même marché dans ce moment soit couronné du même succès. Plus la crise actuelle est importante, plus la concorde et la persévérance doit devenir l'apanage des Puissances Alliées. Que tout intérêt particulier s'ajourne devant les grandes intérêts de la cause dont nous sommes les défenseurs, et mon cœur et mes calculs m'assurent que nous en soutirons avec gloire.

"V. M. I. et le Roi de Prusse étant décidés à remettre encore au sort des armes la grande question de la liberté Européen, à moins que l'Empereur Napoléon ne se prete à des conditions qui assurent une garantie durable à la pacification, je propose à V. M. que si l'armée combinée n'aurait pas reçu des renforts assez considérables avant l'expiration de l'armistice, elle reste derrière l'Oder, jusqu'à ce qu'elle soit égale en nombre à celle de l'ennemi. En attendant je pourrai prendre l'offensif si V. M. I. et le Roi de Prusse mettent de

trustful union of all the powers, and employment of their whole means to forward the great objects of the alliance and secure the deliverance of Europe. Yet amidst all these boundless and dazzling professions there was something in his demeanour which did not escape the practised eye of Sir Charles Stewart, and awakened from the very first strong suspicions of his sincerity, or at least of his disposition to go all the length in favour of the alliance which his eloquent words would lead every one to imagine.

8. Sir Charles Stewart's account of him in his published work.

"I dined," says Sir Charles Stewart, "on the day of my arrival at Greifswald, with the Prince Royal of Sweden, and had two long conferences with his Royal Highness. His engaging manners, spirited conversation, facility of expression, and the talent which displayed itself in all he said, convinced me on my first interview that he was no ordinary man. It was, however, my duty not to permit myself to be dazzled by his brilliancy, but to endeavour, if possible, to ascertain through the glitter that surrounded him what were his real views, and how far the warmth of his expressions and splendour of his designs would be borne out by the reality of his services

suite à ma disposition les corps dont l'état suit;* en ajoutant à cette force 30,000 Suédois je me trouverai à l'ouverture de la campagne avec plus de 60,000 hommes, non compris un corps de 15,000 hommes que je laisserai pour masquer les Danois et les Français à Hamburg et Lubeck. C'est ainsi, Sire, que nous devons dissiper les nuages momentanés qui ont obscurci la sérénité de nos relations; c'est ainsi que le Continent attend encore de les forces de votre empire et de la loyauté de vos principes la tranquillité et l'indépendance qu'il réclament. Les peuples de l'Allemagne ne demandent qu'un guide; la Cour d'Autriche ne pourra pas rester indifférente à la vocation brillante qui lui presente à la fois sa propre sûreté, sa gloire, ses destinées, et les vœux des peuples oppressés. Tous les éléments pour réussir existent encore: séparés, ils ne tourneront qu'au profit de notre ennemis; unis, ils sauveront le monde. Oui, Sire! accepter la paix en ce moment dictée par l'Empereur Napoléon c'est poser la peine sépulchrale pour l'Europe; et si cet malheur arrive, il n'y a que l'Angleterre et la Suède qui peuvent rester intacts."—LE PRINCE ROYAL DE SUÈDE *à* L'EMPEREUR DE RUSSIE, *Stralsund*, 10 *Juin* 1813, *MS.*

* Corps de M. Lieut.-Général Bulow,	25,000
,, Lanjeron,	6,000
,, Comte de Walmoden,	6,000
,, Woronzoff,	4,000
Bataillons épars,	6,000
	47,000

CHAP. IX. 1813.

to the general cause. The cautious line he had adopted and maintained during the last campaign had been of the utmost service to the Allies, and nothing had yet occurred in his demeanour which could be made the subject of reproach. But it must be owned there was nothing to justify confidence. It remained to be seen whether the future would wear a more promising aspect. The unequivocal proof of his sincerity would have been to have boldly and unreservedly committed his new subjects against his old friends; and it was not possible to believe him fully in earnest until we should see him fairly in action at the head of his Swedes, with French troops for his opponents. He was on the eve of setting out for Trachenberg, the Allied headquarters, at the moment of my arrival. The impression on my mind, from his conversation, is exactly conveyed by a phrase, of which I availed myself when recording what passed—'He clothed himself in a pelisse of war, but his under garments were made of Swedish objects and peace.' What further confirmed me in this opinion was, that a celebrated and distinguished general officer who was at that period one of my colleagues at the Swedish headquarters, emphatically assured me—'Le zèle du Prince se montrera toujours plus à mesure qu'il se croira moins nécessaire.'"[1]

[1] Sir Chas. Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, June 9, 1813; Lond. 76, 77.

9. His private correspondence on the subject.

Sir Charles Stewart, at the time when his very interesting work on the German war was published (1830), did not deem himself justified in giving men at large the suspicions which he was led at this period to form as to Bernadotte's sincerity in the cause; but these reasons for reserve no longer exist, and his private correspondence at this period with Lord Castlereagh goes a great deal farther, and shows that he had come at this period, not only to entertain the gravest doubts on the subject, but that a variety of facts had occurred which tended strongly to confirm them. The Secretary of State, Baron Winterstedt, General Aldercreutz, General Count Lowen-

helm, and in general all the Swedish officers of rank, were not only most able, but honest and sincere men, devoted to the cause of their country and of Europe; but no one could be long at the Swedish headquarters without perceiving that behind this, and probably unknown to them, there were secret influences at work, and that the Crown Prince himself was very far from having forgotten his French origin, or detached himself from his French connections. Mademoiselle Georges, the celebrated actress, had recently taken her departure from Stralsund, where she had been in daily communication with Colonel Comps, his confidential adviser, under an escort of horse, and gone to Vandamme's headquarters, where she was reported to have said, "There is nothing to fear from the Prince Royal." Her known intimacy as a political agent, both with Napoleon and Bernadotte, added additional weight to any expressions which, even in the most casual way, dropped from her. In all projected military arrangements, as to which the Prince was abundantly ready with his suggestions and eloquent in their support, it was observed that it was always proposed to keep the Swedes in reserve, and, as far as possible, prevent them from being ever brought into collision with the French troops.*

* "The Prince Royal's chief favourite is Colonel Comps, his foster-brother, and a Frenchman. It is not very unnatural to suppose that this man should lean to French interests; it is suspected he is in the pay of Buonaparte; and it is certain no man more completely controls Bernadotte. The Swedish generals immediately about him are good men, but without talent, and are led by the French officers who form the staff. To give you an idea of the mode in which communications may be carried on, Mademoiselle Georges has been here for some time, and in daily communication with Colonel Comps. When she was sent away, they sent her with an escort to the French advanced posts. She was immediately taken to Vandamme, and he is known afterwards to have said to the Danish general, with whom he was acting—'Ah! ne craignez rien du Prince Royal. Mademoiselle Georges m'a répandu qu'il ne fera rien.' Now, if this anecdote is correct—and I can entertain little doubt of it—I leave you to determine to what length of communication such facilities as the one cited may have afforded. You will know, I conclude, from Mr Thornton, everything relating to the late correspondence with Vandamme, and I feel a delicacy in adding much more on the subject of politics here, which I should be inclined to, if you had not had recently such an able exposition from General

CHAP. IX.

1813.

10. His real views and designs.

Sir Charles Stewart was naturally led to fear at the time that Bernadotte was playing false to the Allies, or, at least, that he was still mainly influenced by his early feelings and associations, and that he would temporise as long as possible in order to avoid being brought into actual collision with the land of his birth, and lose his chance

Hope. If I differ from him in my views, I am not so vain as to desire them to be more considered, but I feel it right to give you the impression of a new mind upon the events occurring on the theatre in which I have been momentarily introduced."—SIR CHARLES STEWART *to* LORD CASTLEREAGH, *July* 8, 1813 (*Secret and Confidential*), *MS.*

"The Prince Royal strikes me as being thoroughly French, *cœur et l'ame*. His engaging manners, his spirited conversation, his facility of expression, and the talents which are perceptible, even on a first interview, made no great impression on me, because I was prepared to meet all this. I rather regarded him as a highly finished actor; and I doubt if he is, in the long run, a character either to admire or confide in. On the contrary, I should even be disposed to watch him narrowly; and the shifts and adroitness he can display and possesses, would make me, when sure of him, on the *qui vive*. Characters operate differently on different men. I should say Bernadotte has little sterling worth in his composition; and though I am free to admit his conduct during the last campaign was of vital importance to the Allies, and though we have hitherto nothing to reproach him with, still he awakens in my mind suspicion rather than confidence. I may judge Bernadotte harshly, but I never can look up to him, nor shall I ever think him sterling till I see him spill Swedish in drawing French blood.

"Our conversation turned on every subject in a short space. He recapitulated to me all he had done for the common cause, railed at length on the perfidy of Russia, and declared that nothing but his faith in England kept him here, and what might be the event at the conclusion of the armistice must depend on his interview at Trachenberg. I gave him all the merit I conceived he was entitled to for his forbearance last year. But I told him explicitly, I thought he had lost an opportunity in not saving Hamburg, which would not easily occur again, of rendering himself the supporter of the common cause in the north of Germany, by which he would have secured the unbounded confidence of the Allies, without even a risk to the Swedish army. He certainly was not pledged to attempt it; he had just cause to complain of Russia: but there was nothing like a great man taking boldly advantage of the moment; and in this I thought, and should ever think, he had failed. He took this in good part, and justified himself plausibly. He then reverted to the actual crisis, and hinted that if peace was made, England must transport his troops to attack Zealand, and that England and Sweden united could carry on the war. Certainly, throughout the whole of his conversation, I evidently remarked a disposition principally to secure Swedish objects; of the troops to be put under his orders, including Winzingerode, he rather seemed to think insignificantly, and gave me the idea as if he felt events would arrest these arrangements. He said if he had an army of 80,000 men agreeably to his letter to the Emperor, it must be independent of the Grand Army; to advance when he thought right, and retire when he deemed it prudent to do so. He could not commit his fate to the direction of other men having other

of succeeding to the throne of France on the downfall of Napoleon. He was well aware, too, in what a precarious position Bernadotte was placed, and how readily a soldier of fortune, with an ancient crown hardly settled on his head, might be influenced by another soldier of fortune wielding a still more powerful sceptre, and seeking to

objects. I told him I concluded the Emperor and King of Prussia would enter into complete arrangements with him, and fix on combined plans of operation, for concerting which the conferences of Trachenberg had been set on foot, than which nothing could be more advantageous to the common cause, and if I was so fortunate as to see him on his return, I trusted I would find all the arrangements had been to his satisfaction. The Prince then asked me about the treaties of concert and subsidy with Russia and Prussia. I communicated the substance of them to him frankly; and when he asked my opinion whether the armistice would be prolonged, I said I did not think it could be, under our treaty, without the consent of England. He thought as I did on this subject, but remarked that Russia and Prussia in their proceedings thought more of themselves than either Sweden or England. He denied that Sweden had accepted the late mediation of Austria; and while he was impressing on my mind the renewal of the war with vigour, I plainly perceived he had no confidence in this being the issue of events; and if I can read into his secret thoughts, there is little desire it should be so. Forced to take a part, lest Russia and Prussia should leave him in the lurch, he clothes himself in a pelisse of war, while his under garments are formed of Swedish objects and peace. By attaining the former, he raises himself; by the latter, he is not committed against that nation, the love of which is inherent. England will retain him as long as it is for his advantage to be retained; but there is no natural link between him and his present allies. If I have given you these ideas unnecessarily, burn this letter; you know I write to you in the candour of my heart. I should not forget to mention that the news had arrived of the division in the House of Commons on the Swedish treaty. You have fought this admirably; the Prince was in raptures, and you are his greatest favourite. I owe it to you, that notwithstanding the openness with which I expressed my feelings, as to his not having saved Hamburg, and how much I thought was now expected of him, he dismissed me at parting as he received me at coming, with two very warm kisses."—SIR CHARLES STEWART *to* LORD CASTLEREAGH, *Stralsund, July* 8, 1813 (*Private and Secret*), *MS.*

Sir Charles Stewart's views at this time as to the Coalition holding together were very gloomy. On June 6, he wrote from Reichenbach, the place of the sovereigns' congress: "The news we send home is not the best; and from what I see, I fear political treachery and the machinations of those that are in the wind, more than any evils from Buonaparte's myrmidons. We must keep a sharp lookout, especially since our refusal of Austrian mediation. We are not considered, from all I see, as in the Cabinet. The accounts from Hamburg and Stralsund are bad. I fear the Swedes will go, and Buonaparte get 20,000 Danes in the north. However, we shall turn him yet, if we can confine him to fair fighting. The Prince Royal has not been managed as he should have been by Russia; and if the Emperor does not turn his tone, Bernadotte will yet seize Finland. The disorder in the Russian army is great; Prussians are infinitely better. They have everywhere distinguished them-

CHAP. IX. 1813.

detach him from the league of his enemies by still more dazzling offers than they had it in their power to present to him. But though subsequent events, as will appear in the sequel of this biography, abundantly proved that these apprehensions were to a certain extent well founded, yet there is nothing in his conduct or words which warrants the belief that he ever intended to be openly unfaithful to the alliance, or make that common cause with Napoleon which Sir Charles Stewart, from his dubious conduct, was led to apprehend. The truth is, that he was personally hostile to the French Emperor. He had owed him nothing in his elevation to the throne, which was entirely owing to himself; and, since that event, he had been publicly insulted by him in the bulletins. He was too clear-sighted, also, not to see the extreme peril of the course upon which Napoleon was now entering, and the impolicy in linking himself, in any degree, with his tottering fortunes. But while Bernadotte had not the slightest intention of allying himself to him, he was extremely desirous to avoid taking any open or active part against him. He desired, like Austria, to take advantage of the crisis to secure Norway for Sweden, but he was extremely averse to committing himself to any contest *à toute outrance* with France, or engaging his troops in any action which might engender a feeling of animosity between the two countries. In addition to the obvious motive of wishing to do this in order to spare the lives of his soldiers, drawn from a thinly peopled country, and suffering under nothing so much as a want of inhabitants, and the anxiety to do nothing which might put in hazard his popularity with his new subjects

selves, and will do much in a little time. You cannot send them too much ammunition and arms. Russia rides the bear over them, but they are obedient and patient, and I will pledge my faith for them. Although the Germans will not burn their Moscow and lay waste their country, still they will be true; and Prussia will not be the first power to withdraw from the English alliance. I cannot help thinking the great personages of the drama will here meet, and Metternich will try some family alliances to aid the objects of peace. If things turn to a congress, and a negotiation is required, pray send a very able man. Depend upon it he will be required."—SIR CHARLES STEWART *to* LORD CASTLEREAGH, *Reichenbach, June* 6, 1813, *MS.*

or endanger the crown not yet settled upon his head, there were two other circumstances which in an especial manner made him desirous to avoid becoming a principal in the strife.

11. His real and secret views at this period.

The first of these was, that notwithstanding his warm and adulatory professions of admiration for the Emperor Alexander, he was in reality much irritated by the conduct of that monarch. This he evinced in an unmistakable manner in conversation with Sir Charles Stewart, as appears from the letter quoted above. He was highly dissatisfied with the support which he had received from the Cabinet of St Petersburg in his demand for Norway, even although Alexander had united with Great Britain in agreeing to throw no obstacles in the way of that acquisition; and, as Austria had recently made offers to Denmark to support her in the retention of Norway, on condition of her acceding to her proposals of an armed mediation, and a negotiation had for some time been going on between the Cabinets of St Petersburg and that of Copenhagen with a view to the latter joining the Coalition, he was fearful, not without reason, that the condition of that accession would be the retention of Norway. In these circumstances, the Crown Prince conceived that he had no need to put forth his strength for the interests of a power which was evincing no steadiness in the support of his peculiar objects. It was for this reason that he had not interfered to oppose the Danes who assisted Vandamme in recovering Hamburg. He knew that such an event would render the breach between them and the Allied sovereigns irreparable. In addition to this, there was another reason still more cogent, which rendered him anxious not to irritate the feelings of the French against him. His vivid imagination and sanguine temperament had already prefigured to him not only the fall of Napoleon as a probable event, but *his own election by the French to succeed him*, as by no means an improbable one. He had thus come to indulge in what Frederick the Great called "the most entrancing dream of

CHAP. IX. 1813.

a sovereign, that of being King of France." Extravagant as these ideas may now seem, it will appear in the sequel that they were by no means without foundation. It has been already mentioned that the Czar had encouraged these hopes, and that Bernadotte had some grounds for his elevated aspirations.[1]

[1] Thiers, xvi. 11, 12.

12. State of negotiations at Prague.

While these jealousies, arising from clashing political designs, were endangering the common cause in the north of Germany, interests still more vital were in hazard, dangers still more pressing were imperilling the alliance at the conferences consequent on the armistice of Pleswitz. It has been already mentioned that, in agreeing to that armistice, and even urging it upon the Allied sovereigns, Napoleon had no intention whatever of yielding to the terms proposed by Austria, or abating, save in regard to the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, one iota from his own pretensions, but that his only object was to gain time, and, if possible, not less than two months, to complete his hostile preparations, and bring forward the vast reserve forces which he was preparing in Italy, Germany, and on the Rhine. "Nevertheless," says Thiers, "although this was his fixed determination, as now appears from his orders, diplomatic communications, and secret admissions made to his confidential ministers, yet it was indispensable not to let this resolution be divulged, either to the Allied powers or the generals or marshals around him, of whose zeal and fidelity he stood much in need. Such a revelation of his inmost thoughts would at once have determined Austria against him, spread despair among his allies, and thoroughly disheartened his officers, and indeed the whole army. The armed force was already more than lukewarm in his cause. Ever ready to combat at the call of honour, they did not the less deplore the fatal obstinacy which led him to shed so much blood for a cause which they were no longer well able to understand. They knew well that, after the disasters of Moscow and the Beresina, they stood in need of some signal victories to restore the tarnished lustre of their

arms. But after Lützen and Bautzen this was done, and nothing more for that purpose could be required. If the army were to know that they were now required to continue the contest, and shed their blood, not for the independence of France, or to assert the honour of her arms, but for Lubeck, Hamburg, Bremen, and the vain title of Protector of the Confederation of the Rhine, they could not be expected to evince their wonted enthusiasm in his cause. And what might be looked for if they knew that the peace which he rejected, and to resist which he was involving them in endless toils and sufferings, would have secured to the Emperor, Belgium, the Rhenish Provinces, Holland, Piedmont, Tuscany, Rome, Naples, and the entire command of Italy?"[1]

[1] Thiers, xvi. 5, 6.

13. Napoleon's line of policy in consequence.

Aware of the prevalence of these ideas both among his superior officers and soldiers, and yet determined not to yield to them, Napoleon adopted two principles for the regulation of his conduct, which swayed it throughout the whole of the armistice, and indeed through all the remainder of his reign. The first was, to avail himself of every expedient which, without revealing his secret designs, might prolong the conferences, and gain for him time to complete his preparations and bring up his forces. By stickling for forms, and availing himself of every possible technical objection, it was not difficult to effect this object. The second was, to inform none but his most intimate counsellors of his real intentions, or the conditions of the peace for which he was to contend; and to hold out to all others, even those apparently most in his confidence, that the terms which Austria proposed were such as no Frenchman could for a moment admit. Maret alone was admitted to his inmost thoughts, and knew that the whole contest was about Hamburg and the Hanse towns. He wrote meanwhile in secret cipher to the Minister of War at Paris, and to Prince Eugene in Italy, that he had signed this armistice because he was desirous of gaining time to complete his preparations against Austria, to whom he was

CHAP. IX.

1813.

about to give, not receive, the law; and in the mean time to spare no efforts so as the army of Italy might by the end of July menace Austria in Italy, and that of Mayence threaten Bavaria on the Maine. They were enjoined "to act so that the days should *count double*, for hardly two months remain to complete the preparations which are indispensable. The armistice, without doubt, may possibly lead to a peace; but, even in that event, we should not relax a moment in our preparations for war; for it is only by being prepared at all points that the peace can be rendered secure or durable."[1]

[1] Napoleon to Prince Cambacérès, June 6, 1813, and to Prince Eugene, same date; Thiers, xvi. 7, 8.

14. Preliminary difficulties in point of form stated by France.

The better to carry out these projects, he returned as soon as the armistice was signed to Dresden. The first object was to insure delay, and this was easily accomplished. M. de Bubna, the Austrian envoy, in vain waited for hours every day in the antechambers of the Palais Marcolini, in the faubourg Frederickstadt, which Napoleon had selected for his residence in Dresden, soliciting an interview of the Emperor. The preliminary point which furnished a pretext for these delays, was the question whether the plenipotentiaries of the different powers should treat directly with each other, or address their communications mutually to Austria as the mediating power. Metternich strongly supported the latter course as the one most respectful and advantageous to the mediating power; Caulaincourt and Maret as strongly maintained the reverse, alleging, with some truth, that the character of ally of France, which Austria still bore, was inconsistent with that of mediator between powers engaged in a negotiation, and that the propositions on Napoleon's side should come from France, and *Austria and France united*, and be addressed directly to the Allied plenipotentiaries. Above two weeks were lost in the vain interchange of notes on this point, and at length the difficulty was avoided by the agreement that, to preserve the independence essential to the character of a mediator, the alliance should be considered as *suspended*, not broken;[2]

[2] Maret to Metternich, June 15, 1813; Metternich to Maret, June 26, 1813; Fain, ii. 129-130.

an equivocal expression, which Napoleon justly considered equivalent to its entire dissolution.

1813. 15. The Emperor Francis comes to Gitschin in Bohemia, and Metternich to Dresden.

The Cabinet of Vienna and the Allied sovereigns were so strongly impressed with the obvious desire to procrastinate, evinced by the stress laid by the French plenipotentiaries on these senseless formalities, that both resolved to adopt every measure likely to cut short the negotiations and terminate the delays, which it was evident were all likely to turn out to the advantage of the French Emperor. In great alarm, Metternich advised the Emperor Francis to hasten from Vienna to the Castle of Gitschin in Bohemia, to be at hand for the conduct of the conferences; while the Emperor of Russia and King of Prussia took up their residence at Trachenberg, at no great distance. The Austrian Emperor's movements had been much hastened by another circumstance. The Emperor Alexander, who was well informed of the vast extent of the preparations of the French Emperor, and the inestimable importance of even a few weeks' delay to his interest, had despatched on his side his Minister of Foreign Affairs, Count Nesselrode, to meet Metternich, and represent to him the imminent danger to Austria and Germany of the conclusion of a separate peace with Russia, which Napoleon was eagerly soliciting him to conclude, and which could be arranged in a few hours by simply admitting M. de Caulaincourt to a conference with the Czar. Such was the alarm excited by the communication of the object of Nesselrode's mission, made by Count Stadion, and the obvious danger of Austria being left in the lurch by a separate treaty between France and Russia, that within twenty-four hours of the arrival of the despatch at Vienna, the Emperor Francis, to the great astonishment of his court, took his departure for Bohemia, and established himself at the Castle of Gitschin.[1]

[1] Fain, ii. 34, 35; Thiers, xvi. 47-49; Sir Chas. Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, July 4, 1813, MS.

Immediately after his arrival there, Metternich, who was now seriously alarmed at the perilous position of his country, came to a sincere and truthful explanation, in a

CHAP. IX.

1813.

16. Explicit explanation between Metternich and Nesselrode. June 3.

verbal conference with Nesselrode, of the real views and wishes of the Cabinet of Vienna. He explained to him that the Emperor Francis, actuated alike by his affection for his daughter and grandson, and the interests of his people, was sincerely desirous to avoid hostilities, and was not without hopes of securing the independence of Germany, and possibly regaining some of his lost provinces, without recurring to the sad alternative of war; that, in addition to this, Austria, not less than the French Emperor, had need of time to complete and bring forward her armaments, which as yet were far from being complete or ready for action. For these reasons the Cabinet of Vienna would honestly and in good faith work out the character of mediator before they assumed any other; that they would faithfully act on this principle during the whole continuance of the armistice; that they could not possibly, situated as they were, pass from the part of an ally to that of an enemy without going through the intermediate state of a mediator, and consequently they could not take an active part till the whole resources of mediation were exhausted; but that, when this was done, if the French Emperor still resisted the terms which they should propose, they would, on the expiry of the armistice, join their forces to those of the Allies, to rescue Europe from the domination of Napoleon. Contrary to usual diplomatic usages, but moved by the gravity of the circumstances, M. de Metternich, in addition to these official assurances, gave Nesselrode the Emperor's *word of honour* that he would make good these engagements.[1]

[1] Thiers, xvi. 22, 23; Fain, ii. 140, 141.

17. Napoleon's fresh delays.

In conformity with this declared intention of accepting and acting up to the character of a mediator, Metternich, on the 11th June, the very day after Napoleon had established himself in Dresden, presented a note to him by M. de Bubna, in which he stated that "Russia and Prussia had accepted the Austrian mediation, and were in course of submitting their proposals to her, and that he invited

France to do the same." * Napoleon kept the note till the 15th, without returning any answer; and when he did make a reply, it was one which, without stating any proposals of accommodation on the part of France, simply contended M. de Bubna's authority to make such a communication, and objected to the assumption of the character of mediator by Austria, while she still, in form at least, retained that of an ally. Several notes were in consequence exchanged, and much time lost in discussing this preliminary point.

18. Signature of the Treaty of June 15, by England, Russia, and Prussia.

Warned by Sir Charles Stewart of the dilatory policy which Napoleon was commencing, Lord Castlereagh lost no time in drawing more closely the bonds between Great Britain and the two main pillars of the alliance, Russia and Prussia. On the 15th June the definitive treaty of alliance was signed between these two powers in pursuance of the conventions, already mentioned, agreed to in the spring preceding. By this treaty, which was signed by Lord Cathcart on the part of England, M. Nesselrode on that of Russia, and M. de Hardenberg on that of Prussia, it was finally stipulated that Great Britain should advance two millions sterling to the two allied powers, two-thirds to Russia and one-third to Prussia; in consideration of which the former was to maintain an army of 160,000, the latter one of 80,000 men, in the field. In addition to this, a measure of still greater importance was, upon the suggestion of Lord

* The points of difference between Austria and the Allies, at this time, are thus stated by Sir C. Stewart: "I saw a letter of the Prussian minister (Humboldt) to the Austrian Court, dated the 1st June. He says that Francis will certainly declare against Buonaparte unless he accepts the terms of peace proposed by Austria, which differ from those proposed by the Allies, inasmuch as *the latter* require—1. Aggrandisement to Austria; 2. Aggrandisement to Prussia; 3. The separation of the Duchy of Warsaw from France; 4. The *cassation* of the Rhenish Confederacy; 5. The re-establishment of the old dynasty of Spain; 6. The independence of Holland. *Austria*, according to his statement, would be satisfied with the *three first* stipulations. The two former he apprehends Buonaparte would make no difficulty about. The latter, he is certain, he will never consent to; so he looks upon the continuance of the war as inevitable, and urges Prussia accordingly."—SIR CHARLES STEWART *to* LORD CASTLEREAGH (*Private and secret*), *June* 6, 1813, *MS.*

CHAP. IX. 1813.

Castlereagh, agreed to, and immediately acted upon, which came to exercise a most important influence upon the future fate of the war. This was an emission of paper money to the extent of £5,000,000, guaranteed by the three powers, of which England was to engage for one half, and in which all the purchases for the army and the pay of the troops were made. Guaranteed by these great powers, this paper currency soon got into general circulation. Immense was the effect of this admirable measure, which, being limited in amount, and not exceeding the wants of the case, exhibited the strength of the assignats which enabled the French Republic to resist the assault of the European powers, without the weakness which led to the total destruction of realised capital in that great country. As Great Britain was looked forward to as the eventual paymaster of this paper, and her credit alone gave it currency, so it was to Lord Castlereagh's strenuous and indefatigable efforts that the adoption of the scheme by the Allied powers was owing. He was earnestly set upon its success, and turned to good account on this decisive occasion the principles he had embraced, and the experience he had gained, during the discussions on the report of the Bullion Committee in Parliament three years before.[1]*

[1] See Treaty in Martens, xii. 568; Schoell, x. 261, 262.

* "Baron Hardenberg proposed to me, in addition to the treaty of subsidy and concert, a treaty of alliance, offensive and defensive, with Prussia. I acquainted him that I had no instructions on this head. M. de Nesselrode also put into our hands his plan for the federative paper; and although not reduced to an official shape, yet it appears to me advantageous thus early to enclose you a copy of it—firstly, because we have not been furnished with the ideas promised from Mr Vansittart; secondly, because there are many of its articles not only objectionable, but positively contrary to the instructions received from you. . . .

"The 3d article, relating to the entire responsibility of England to give a fictitious credit to the paper, has been drawn from a knowledge that, such is the state of the finances of Russia and Prussia, it is well ascertained they could never, under the stipulation even of six months after a peace, redeem their portion. The 10th article, permitting this paper to be exchanged against exchequer bills, is positively contrary to the instructions in your private letter of 9th April to Lord Cathcart."—SIR CHARLES STEWART *to* LORD CASTLEREAGH, *Wilrzen, May* 17, 1813; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, viii. 391.

Lord Castlereagh replied:—"My dear Charles,—I return the financial *projets*,

Sir Charles Stewart's efforts with Bernadotte renewed.

While these important negotiations were going on at Gitschin and Dresden, Sir Charles Stewart was actively engaged in organising and improving the efficiency of the troops raised in Hanover. They amounted to 20,000 men, and, considering the short period during which they had been embodied, they presented a very creditable appearance, and formed an important part of the army which was to be commanded by the Prince Royal. He kept constantly urging the Prince to adopt vigorous measures for the prosecution of the war; but "I could perceive," says Sir Charles, "that he had no confidence in the issue of events being fortunate for the Allied cause; and if I could read aright, he had little desire that this should be the case. His Royal Highness proceeded as usual to the map, and discoursed eloquently and scientifically of the great combined operations to be engaged in. This was as it ought to be; but I wanted to see his army in motion; and in pressing this object, he eluded me by saying it would not be prudent to collect his masses too early, as the enemy would become aware of their points of concentration, but he assured me that 10,000 men had marched. Whenever the Prince Royal conversed, it was with the greatest affability and cordiality. It is impossible to resist the fascination of his eloquent expressions, or be indifferent to his insinuating tone and

with such remarks as Mr Vansittart has been enabled to make upon them. The scheme itself of a federative paper originally appeared to us full of difficulty in the execution; but, anxious to encourage a great exertion, we did not hesitate to agree to bear our share if the system could be reduced to practice; but it is too much to expect that we should take the whole, with all its possible abuses, upon ourselves. There would be nearly equal difficulty in introducing a British paper into circulation in Germany, under the present circumstances, with one jointly issued by the combined powers. If it should be found that the credits of the three powers cannot be advantageously combined in the same paper, we might undertake to be answerable for an issue not exceeding 750,000 thalers per month in a paper, for the reimbursement of which Great Britain should be separately liable, till the whole sum of £2,500,000 was issued, which would be in about twenty months; but our responsibility cannot be pushed beyond the original limits, nor ought we to bear more than our share of the progressive monthly expenditure of the armies."—LORD CASTLEREAGH *to* SIR CHARLES STEWART, *June* 22, 1813; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, viii. 406, 407.

CHAP. IX. 1813.

manner; and when armed, as he always is, with a bottle of eau-de-Cologne in one hand and a white handkerchief in the other, inundating everything around him with the perfume, it requires some steadiness to be quite collected or insensible to the elegant flattery of an extraordinary man, who always addresses you as *mon ami*, and admits you seemingly into his entire confidence. To myself individually he was always particularly kind; and when I mentioned the possibility of my being at his headquarters during any interesting operations, he assured me I should be always *bien venu*, intimating, however, at the same time, that he would never agree to any convention or treaty to have British officers, especially general ones, placed near his person."[1]

[1] Sir Chas. Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, July 12, 1813, MS.

20. Interview of Metternich with the Allied sovereigns. June 20.

The evident determination to procrastinate evinced by Napoleon, and the success which had hitherto attended his efforts to effect it, induced the Allied sovereigns to solicit a personal conference with M. de Metternich, which was readily accorded, and took place at Oppontscha on the 20th June. The Austrian diplomatist was overwhelmed by caresses and solicitations from the belligerent sovereigns, who represented to him in the strongest manner that peace with Napoleon was impossible, because his government was founded on the principle of universal conquest, and could not exist without it; and that now was the time for Austria to declare herself, and in one short campaign, by joining her forces to those of the Allies, recover all her lost provinces, and avenge the disasters of twenty years. There was no necessity to enforce these views on M. de Metternich; they were sufficiently evident and familiar to his far-seeing understanding. But he was not by any means shaken by their earnest representations in his resolution to persevere in his character of a mediator before he assumed that of a belligerent. He felt that Austria at that moment had ties with Napoleon arising from family connection and public treaties which could not be rudely severed. He knew that, whatever he said

to the contrary, her own military preparations were far from complete, and would require at least six weeks more for their entire development. Recent events had shaken his confidence in the ability of Russia and Prussia to resist on the German plains the restored military strength of Napoleon; and if they were overthrown, nothing but total ruin to the Austrian monarchy was to be apprehended from the wrath of the victor. Influenced by these considerations, Metternich announced to the Allied sovereigns, without contesting any of their representations, in repeated interviews, that the part of Austria was taken, and that they must exhaust the *rôle* of a mediator before they took up that of a belligerent. He explained to them the terms which he intended to propose to the French Emperor, and engaged solemnly, as he had done to Nesselrode, that if they were declined the whole forces of Austria should forthwith be joined to those of the Coalition.[1]

[1] Thiers, xvi. 58-60 Sir Charles Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, July 13, 1813, MS.

21. Napoleon invites M. de Metternich to Dresden.

No sooner did Napoleon hear of the conferences at Oppontscha, and frequent meeting of Metternich with the Allied sovereigns, than he came to see that his system of procrastination could not be safely carried on further without some modification. He became fearful that the Allied sovereigns would come to an understanding with the Emperor of Austria, and assail him with their united forces as soon as the armistice expired on the 20th July, when his own preparations were far from being complete. It had become indispensable to make, in semblance at least, some concession to Austria, in order to open the way for negotiations, by which further time might be gained. To achieve this object, he resolved to invite M. de Metternich to Dresden, to have a personal conference with himself and his ministers. By this course, not only would time be gained, but, what was almost of equal importance, an insight might be obtained into the views of the coalesced powers, and the terms which Austria was to propose to the contending parties. He sent, accordingly, an invitation to M. de Metternich to come to Dresden, with a view to a

CHAP. IX. 1813.

personal interview, which the latter received at Gitschin, within a few hours after his return from the conferences at Oppontscha. Metternich immediately accepted the invitation, and set out at once for Dresden, bearing with him a second autograph letter from the Emperor Francis to Napoleon, in which he again conjured him, in the warmest and most affectionate terms, to make peace "the last and only glory which it remained for him to acquire."[1]

[1] Fain, ii. 32, 33; Thiers, xvi. 61, 62.

22. Interview of Metternich with Maret. June 26.

The Austrian minister arrived at Dresden on 25th June, and on the following day had his first interview with the Duke de Bassano (Maret). Skilfully anticipating his adversary's attack, the French minister, after the first ceremonies of politeness were over, began lamenting the delay which had already taken place in the negotiations, which he ascribed to the ambiguous declarations and dubious character of Austria. He renewed again all the objections already stated to the same party being an ally and a mediator, and to the propositions of the contending parties being addressed to the mediating power instead of being communicated directly to each other. M. de Metternich recapitulated all the answers already repeatedly made to these objections, and listened patiently to Maret's replies; but though no result followed from this discussion, the object of the French Emperor was gained, for two days more were lost in this trifling dispute. When this preliminary point was exhausted rather than decided, and delay was no longer practicable, the Emperor agreed to receive M. de Metternich in person, and the interview took place in the Palace Marcolini, at two o'clock in the afternoon, on the 28th June. It proved the most important and interesting of the many important and interesting interviews which Napoleon had during his eventful career, and fortunately its particulars were recorded at the time by persons of the very highest credit and authority.[2] *

[2] Thiers, xvi. 62, 63; Fain, ii. 34, 35.

* The substance of this memorable conference is given by Baron Fain, Napoleon's private secretary, in his work on the German Campaign, from what he collected at the time at the French headquarters; and again by M. Thiers, in his

1813. 23. Interview of Metternich with Napoleon. June 28.

M. de Metternich, on this memorable occasion, was ushered in through an antechamber filled with foreign ministers and officers of all grades, all in the deepest state of anxiety and suspense, to the Emperor's private apartment. Berthier, who ushered him in, said as he did so, in a whisper—"Well, do you bring us peace? Be reasonable: let us terminate this war, for we have much need it should stop, as well as yourself." From these words the Austrian diplomatist instantly drew the conclusion, which was not ill founded, that whatever the Emperor himself might wish, those around him ardently desired an accommodation. When he entered the inner room he found Napoleon standing with his hat under his arm, and his sword by his side—calm and polite, but having the look of one who was boiling over with feelings which he had the greatest difficulty in restraining. His first words were—"Here you are, then, M. de Metternich, *at last.* You have come very late; for twenty-four days have elapsed since the armistice was signed, and nothing has yet been done. All this has arisen from the delays of Austria. I have long been sensible that I could not rely on my relations with that power. No extent of obligation or kind deeds has been able to overcome your inveterate hostility towards me. I have three times restored his throne to the Emperor Francis. I have even committed the fault of espousing his daughter in the hope of attaching him; but nothing has been able to awaken in him more favourable sentiments. Last year, reckoning on him, I concluded a treaty by which I guaranteed his dominions as he did mine. If he had told me that such a treaty did not suit his views, I should not have insisted on it, and I should not have engaged in the war of Russia. In fine, however, he did sign it, and I engaged, in consequence, in the Russian war, which the elements rendered unfortunate, and now

seventeenth volume of the *Consulat et l'Empire*, from a copy of notes made at the same time by M. de Metternich himself. The account in the text is taken from a comparison of both, with some additional matter gleaned by Lord Londonderry.

CHAP. IX. 1813.

he is the first to hesitate; he no longer desires what he seemed formerly most anxiously to wish, and interposes between my enemies and myself, as he says, to effect a negotiation—in effect, to arrest the course of my victories and to snatch from my hands adversaries whom I was on the point of destroying. If you no longer desire my alliance, if it hangs heavy on you, if it is dragging you towards a war which is repugnant to you, why not tell me so at once? I would no longer insist on the alliance—your neutrality would suffice; and in the hour when it is announced, the Coalition is dissolved. But, under pretence of inducing peace by interposing your mediation, you have armed; and, now that your armaments are terminated, or nearly so, you pretend to dictate conditions to me, which in effect are those of my enemies. In a word, you come forward as those who are ready at a moment's warning to declare war against me. Explain yourself! Is it war which you desire? Are men, then, utterly incorrigible? Are the lessons of experience wholly lost upon them? The Russians and Prussians, in spite of the cruel experience they have had, have dared to confront me; and I have beaten them—beaten them well, whatever they may say to the contrary. Are you determined, you too, to have your turn? Well, be it so: I assign you a time and place for the encounter, and it is *Vienna in October next.*"

24. Metternich's answer.

This impassioned harangue, which Napoleon poured forth with great and increasing violence, did not for a moment shake the coolness of the Austrian diplomatist. "Sire!" replied he, "we have no wish to engage in war, but we desire to put a period to a state of things which has become intolerable to Europe—to a state of things which menaces every one, and your Majesty at every moment, with a universal *bouleversement.* Your Majesty is as much interested in it as we are; for, if fortune should one day prove treacherous—and in that fatal mutability of things there is no saying how soon she may do so—it is by no means impossible that you may incur fatal chances."

"But what do you wish," replied Napoleon—"what have you come to ask of me?" "A peace," replied Metternich, "necessary, indispensable, of which you have as much need as we; which secures your situation as well as our own." He then, with infinite delicacy, and insinuating, rather than openly demanding, expressed the terms proposed—viz., the abandonment of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, and the reconstitution of Prussia from it; the relinquishment of Hamburg, Lubeck, and Bremen; and the relinquishment of the title of Protector of the Confederation of the Rhine. It was with the utmost difficulty that Napoleon heard it out. "Oh!" said he, when the Austrian minister concluded, "I see what you would be at. To-day you demand only some ports of Illyria, to furnish harbours to Austria; parts of Westphalia and the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, to reconstitute Prussia; the towns of Lubeck, Hamburg, and Bremen, to restore the commerce of Germany, and to re-establish its pretended independence; the abolition of the Protectorate of the Rhine—a vain title, as you call it. But I know what you desire in secret. You Austrians desire to get Italy entirely to yourselves; your friends the Russians desire Poland; the Prussians are set on Saxony; the English on Belgium and Holland. And if I yield to-day, you will to-morrow demand of me those the objects of your most ardent desires. But before you get them, prepare to raise millions of men, to shed the blood of many generations, and to come to treat at the foot of Montmartre. *O Metternich! how much has England given you to propose such terms to me?*"

25. Continued.

When Napoleon pronounced the last words he was in such a state of indignation and passion that he was in a manner beside himself. Without losing his presence of mind at the Emperor's anger, Metternich replied: "There is no question put now of such demands, nor could they be insisted on but after a disastrous war imprudently prolonged. There may be a few heads turned in St Petersburg, London, and Berlin, in which such thoughts may

CHAP. IX. 1813.

be germinating, but there are none at Vienna. There nothing is asked but what is really desired, and nothing more; and the true way to extinguish the pretensions of those madmen is to accept peace—an honourable peace—for that which I offer to you is not only honourable, but glorious." A little mollified by these words, Napoleon replied: "If the question is only the cession of a few territories, I may be induced to yield; but if the Coalition pretends to dictate the law to me, to constrain me to submit, to deprive me of my prestige, to tarnish my glory, I tell you at once I would rather die than consent to such terms. Your sovereigns have not the feelings of soldiers; they cannot conceive what they are. If they are defeated, they retire beaten to their capitals, and that is an end of it. I am a soldier. I have need of honour and glory. I cannot reappear lessened in the midst of my people. I must remain great, glorious, admired." "But if that is the case, when is war ever to terminate," replied Metternich, "if your defeats, equally with your victories, are a motive for continuing the conquest? Victorious, you wish to reap the fruit of your victories; vanquished, you must strive to raise yourself again! Sire! are we then for ever to remain with arms in our hands; for ever depending, as you do, on the chance of battles?" "But," replied Napoleon, "I do not belong to myself alone, but to that noble nation of which I admire the courage, and which at my voice has with generous prodigality poured forth its blood. Can I requite such devotion by personal calculations, by weakness? I must, on the contrary, strain every nerve to preserve for it the greatness it has so nobly bought by such heroic efforts." "But, Sire," replied M. de Metternich, "that brave nation, whose gallantry all admire, has itself need of repose. I have just traversed your army; your regiments are composed of children; you have anticipated the regular levies, and called to arms a generation not yet formed; if that generation is destroyed by the war in which you are engaged, where will you find a new one

to supply its place? Will you descend to a still younger brood of children?"

These words, which touched Napoleon on the tenderest point—the failure of men capable of bearing arms in his dominions—roused him beyond all control. "He became pale with rage; his visage was totally changed," says M. Thiers; "and either by design or accident he let fall his hat, which, notwithstanding his habitual politeness, M. de Metternich did not pick up. Going straight up to him, the Emperor said, 'You are not a soldier, sir! you have not even the soul of a soldier: you have not lived in camps, or learned to despise your own life or those of others when their sacrifice is necessary. What are two hundred thousand men to me? *I can afford to spend a hundred thousand men every year.*' These words profoundly moved M. de Metternich, who exclaimed, 'Let us open, Sire! let us open the windows, that Europe in a body may hear you; and if it does so, the cause I am pleading will not suffer.' 'After all,' exclaimed Napoleon, 'the French, of whose blood you are so chary, have not so much reason to complain of me. I have lost, it is true, 200,000 men in Russia, and among them are 100,000 French soldiers of the very best kind; these I deeply regret. As to the others, Italians, Poles, and Germans, I care nothing for them.' 'That,' rejoined Metternich, 'is not a reason to assign to a German.' 'You pleaded the cause of the French,' replied the Emperor, 'and I answered for them. In Russia I was baffled by nothing but the weather; I could foresee and surmount everything except nature; I can conquer men, but not the elements. On the field of battle I was constantly victorious; if I have lost cannons it was from the effect of the cold alone, which destroyed the horses.' He descanted for above an hour on this topic, pouring forth his thoughts without waiting for an answer, walking up and down the room with extreme rapidity, and kicking his hat, which still lay on the ground, into a corner of the apartment. At length he

CHAP. IX. 1813.

reverted to the main object of the conference, and dwelt upon the enormity that Austria, whom he had three times pardoned, and in favour of whom he had committed the grevious fault of marrying an archduchess, should dare to think of hostilities against him. 'It may have been a fault,' rejoined Metternich, 'for Napoleon the warrior and conqueror; it was no fault for Napoleon the politician and founder of an empire.' 'Fault or no fault, you are determined then to declare war against me. Be it so. What are your means for carrying it on? You pretend to have 200,000 men in Bohemia, and at the very utmost you have only 100,000, and of these not 80,000 will ever appear in line.'

27. Concluded.

"With these words, which in reality were, as the event proved, entirely well-founded as to the Austrian numbers, he led M. de Metternich into his working cabinet, and showed him his statistics and notes of the numbers of the Austrian forces. 'You see,' said he, 'that I am acquainted with everything; you need not attempt to frighten me by chimeras: M. de Narbonne has covered Austria with his spies; I know everything as well as you do yourselves. You have not 100,000 in Bohemia. You pretend to have 350,000 men under arms, of whom 200,000 are in Bohemia, 100,000 marching to Italy, 50,000 in Bavaria! Bah! These are the calculations of men who know armies only on paper; you must not try to deceive me. Even if you had 350,000 nominally under arms, you would not have more than 100,000 in Bohemia, 50,000 moving towards Italy, and 30,000 in Bavaria. Take my advice, keep out of this quarrel, in which you would run great risks for trifling advantages. You wish Illyria; keep apart and I will cede it to you. Keep neutral, and I will fight beside you and without you. I will give Europe the peace which you desire, and give it equitably to all. But the peace which you would impose upon me by means of your mediation is a constrained peace, which would exhibit me to the eyes of the world as one conquered, to

whom the law has been dictated—the law when I have just gained two dazzling victories. You would have Italy; Russia, Poland; Sweden, Norway; Prussia, Saxony; England, Holland and Belgium. Peace is only a pretext; you are intent on dismembering the French empire. And Austria thinks she has only to declare herself to crown such an enterprise! You pretend here with a stroke of the pen to make the ramparts of Dantzic, Glogau, Magdeburg, Wesel, Mayence, Antwerp, Alessandria —in fine, all the strong places in Europe—sink before you. And I, obedient to your voice, am to evacuate Europe, of which I still retain the half; recall my legions across the Rhine, the Alps, and the Pyrenees; subscribe a treaty which would be nothing but a vast capitulation; and place myself at the mercy of those of whom I am at this moment the conqueror! And it is when my standards still float at the mouths of the Vistula and on the banks of the Oder—when my victorious armies are at the gates of Berlin and Breslau—when I am in person at the head of 300,000 men,—that Austria, without striking a blow, without drawing a sword, expects me to subscribe such conditions! And it is my father-in-law that has matured such a project!' M. de Metternich still held out for the terms originally proposed as the basis of the negotiation. 'You persist then,' cried Napoleon, 'in bidding me defiance; you will give the law to me: be it so; let it be war, and the field of combat Vienna.' With these words he dismissed Metternich, and the conference broke up."[1]

[1] Thiers, xvi. 64-73; Fain, ii. 41, 42; Hard. xii. 192-194; Capefigue, x. 141.

28. Great sensation produced by this interview.

"This memorable interview," says M. Thiers, speaking from the information of M. de Metternich, "did not formally decide the question of peace or war, as will immediately appear; but it virtually did so by revealing, in a manner so inopportune, the hidden thoughts and fixed resolutions of Napoleon. It lasted six hours; and it was so dark when it closed, that the speakers could hardly see one another. Before they separated, Napoleon,

CHAP. IX. 1813.

having a little recovered his temper, and wishing not to separate on angry terms from M. de Metternich, fixed a fresh meeting for the following day. The length of the interview had excited the deepest anxiety in the numerous persons in the antechamber. The anxiety of every visage was even more strongly marked than when M. de Metternich entered. As soon as he came out, Berthier ran up to him to learn what had passed, and eagerly asked if he was satisfied with the Emperor? 'Perfectly so,' replied the Austrian minister; 'he has taken a load off my conscience: for I swear to you your master has lost his senses.'"[1]

[1] Thiers, xvi. 72, 73.

29. Renewal of the conference between Metternich and Maret.

Although, however, the French Emperor had undoubtedly lost his senses during the heat of this debate with Metternich, yet, as was generally the case with him when one of these fits of transport was over, he soon regained them. Hardly had he separated from the Austrian minister, when he felt the most poignant regret at the issue of the conference, which, by threatening to terminate the mediation, was likely to lead to a renewal of hostilities as soon as the armistice came to an end, and long before his preparations were complete. He made Maret accordingly run after M. de Metternich, and fix an hour on the following day for a resumed discussion on the terms of the mediation, and the duration of the armistice. The Austrian diplomatist received with great satisfaction these renewed advances. Independent of the anxious desire which, in common with his imperial master, he felt to avoid hostilities, and gain his objects by a pacific arrangement, he felt that delay was indispensable to himself not less than to Napoleon. His military preparations were even more incomplete than those of the French Emperor; and the latter had in reality rather exaggerated than diminished the force of effective men he could at the moment bring into the field.* Both parties accord-

* In a secret memoir addressed at this period by Prince Schwartzenberg to the Austrian Emperor, dated 28th June 1813, the following reasons were given

ingly met on the following day (29th) with a sincere desire to come to an accommodation, at least so far as the mode of conducting the negotiations was concerned; and matters were so far accommodated on this point, that another meeting was fixed for a fresh interview with Napoleon in person on the 30th June. They met accordingly; and on this occasion the Emperor showed himself as pacific and accommodating as before he had been stern and uncompromising. He dictated a proposal for the conduct of the negotiations to Maret, which he at once modified according to Metternich's suggestion, and concluded with a proposal for the prolongation of the armistice. This was the real object upon which his heart was set, and with scarce any difficulty the terms were arranged between them. These were, that the armistice should be prolonged from the 25th July, its present term, to the 10th August, which in effect was an extension to the 16th August, as six days' warning of the

June 29.

June 30.

for prolonging the armistice:—"The Bohemian army would not be more than complete on the 20th June. The vast and unexpected preparations of France render an increased armament on the part of Austria necessary. Every unappropriated regiment of the line, the landwehr, and the Hungarian insurrection, must be called out and put into activity. Even if the difficulty of clothing and arming them is got over, it is impossible to bring them to Torgau and Presburg from the south-eastern provinces before the 14th August, and the other troops in proportion. Besides the troops raised in Bavaria, 66,000 under the Viceroy have crossed the Tagliamento, and large reserves are collecting at Würtzburg and Fulda. As these measures menace Vienna, it is necessary to assemble a force at Klagenfurth, and near the capital, to counterbalance them. All this must be done without detachments from the Bohemian army. Carriages cannot be got to supply Russia with the provisions she requires from Bohemia; and as the extension of the French line on the Elbe may render it necessary that part of the Allied force should move into that province, it is most desirable that there should be sufficient horse for supplying such a force, and that, in the mean time, the wants of the Allies should be supplied from Galicia." Count Metternich's principal object in the negotiations at Dresden in the end of June, was to secure the prolongation of the armistice till the 16th August, for the reasons stated in Prince Schwartzenberg's report. He was desirous also that Count Stadion should accompany the Emperor to Trachenberg, who was to be instructed to do his utmost to strengthen and confirm the Prince Royal of Sweden in co-operation with the Allies. Count Metternich now declared that the Emperor Francis's determination was to support the cause for which the Emperor Alexander had made such noble efforts. —*Heads of the Arrangements touching the Armistice and Negotiations, July* 1813; *MS. Londonderry Papers.*

CHAP. IX. 1813.

resumption of hostilities was to be given. Metternich engaged to obtain the consent of the Emperor of Russia and King of Prussia to the extension, though he was well aware that it was decidedly contrary to their wishes. Napoleon held out for the 16th August, independent of the six days, and made a great merit with Metternich with agreeing to the 10th instead. But in truth he was overjoyed at the prolongation which he got, and, instantly changing his tone, loaded M. de Metternich with caresses, and dismissed him to his imperial master at Gitschin with the warmest assurances of affection and regard.[1]

[1] Sir Chas. Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, July 4, 1813, MS.; Thiers, xvi. 78, 79; Fain, ii. 43-46.

30. News of the battle of Vitoria, and its great effect. June 30.

The intelligence of this prolongation of the armistice gave the greatest satisfaction at the French headquarters, where it was universally regarded as a harbinger of peace, and an immense advantage to their arms if war was renewed. Proportionally great was the displeasure with which it was regarded by the Allied sovereigns, who had less to gain than either Napoleon or Francis by delay, and who looked upon it, not without reason, as a concession to the declared wishes of the French Emperor of the most sinister augury. The dissatisfaction thence arising was very great, and might have been attended by the most serious consequences, had not news arrived on the very next day of such importance as gave an entirely new turn to men's thoughts, and completely dispelled any feelings of irritation with which the news of the extension of the armistice had been attended. This was the news of the BATTLE OF VITORIA, gained in Spain by Lord Wellington on the 21st June, the intelligence of which was, by great exertion, forwarded to Germany, and received in both camps on the afternoon of the 29th of that month. The impression in both was extreme. "In the Allied camp," says Sir Charles Stewart, "the impression was strong and universal, and produced, in my opinion, the resumption of hostilities." "Metternich," says Baron Fain, "could not fail, on his return to Gitschin, to learn the details of this victory from the mouths of the English themselves;

and we shall soon see the fatal influence which it exercised on the progress of the negotiations." Nor is it surprising that the French and English diplomatists on the spot should thus concur as to the influence of this great victory on the progress of the negotiations. The Peninsular contest was now decided. It was no longer a consummate general maintaining with inferior means a painful defensive contest; but a victorious chief at the head of the military force of three nations, who, after expelling the enemy from the soil which they had polluted, was preparing to cross the frontier, and carry his triumphant standards into the heart of France. A hundred thousand men, collected round the standards of Wellington, only awaited the fall of the frontier fortresses to descend like a torrent from the Pyrenees, and inundate the valley of the Garonne. The charm of Napoleon's invincibility was at an end. Disaster had overtaken his arms alike in the south and the north of Europe; and the only question Austria had now to consider was, whether she should voluntarily link herself to a sinking empire and a falling cause.[1]

[1] Lond. 88; Fain, ii. 80; Bignon, xii. 171.

31. Napoleon's reasons for fixing on the Elbe as his line of defence.

No sooner was Napoleon assured of the extension of the armistice, and thereby secure of sufficient time to get up his great reinforcements from the rear, than he set with his wonted vigour to organise the means of defence against the Allies. He had no choice but between the line of the Elbe and that of the Rhine; for the intermediate "position of the Saale," of which so much was said in Germany, was as liable to be turned by Bavaria as that of the Elbe by Bohemia, and though a very strong line of defence, supported by the Thuringian Forest on one flank and the Hartz Mountains on the other, against an army of eighty or a hundred thousand men, yet it presented no adequate means of resistance to an assailant who had the command of two hundred and fifty thousand. The Rhine, it is true, was his real base of operations; but to retire to it was to abandon at once

CHAP. IX. 1813.

all for which he was contending. If his eagles recrossed the great frontier stream of France, the whole Confederation of the Rhine was given up, the hostility of Austria rendered certain, and the war, with all its horrors and sufferings, brought home to the soil of France. For these reasons he judged, and, in the circumstances, wisely, to adopt the Elbe as his defensive position, and strain every nerve to maintain it against the utmost efforts of the Allies. This great river, issuing from the Bohemian Mountains between the fortified rocks of Koenigstein and Lilienstein, supported in its course by the bastions of Dresden, Torgau, Wittenberg, Magdeburg, and resting at its northern extremity on the fortified position of Hamburg, all of which were in the hands of the French, presented a position eminently capable of defence, and affording peculiar facilities to a commander like Napoleon, issuing from a fortified central stronghold, and prepared to strike redoubtable blows on the right hand and the left.[1]

[1] Thiers, xvi. 30, 31.

32. Napoleon's measure for fortifying the Elbe at Koenigstein and Dresden.

Having thus resolved on maintaining himself on the line of the Elbe, Napoleon set to work with more even than his wonted vigour to strengthen his position upon it. After his return to Dresden, on the 10th June, he commenced a series of journeys in different directions, to inspect with his own eyes the state of the fortifications, and put them all in the most formidable state of defence. The fortresses of Koenigstein and Lilienstein, situated on precipitous rocks on either side of the Elbe, first attracted his attention, and he provisioned the former with victuals sufficient to maintain an army of a hundred thousand men for ten days. Lilienstein was almost an entire creation, and he soon put it in a formidable posture of defence, and committed its defence to General Rogniat with two thousand men. His plan was to use these two fortresses as *points d'appui*, to cross the river, and debouch in the rear of the Allied armies, if they ventured to descend from Bohemia on the rear of the French army

at Dresden. To facilitate such a movement, and secure the Saxon capital from insult during its operation, he added greatly to its fortifications, which had been nearly completely dismantled, at the earnest request of the citizens. Of the old rampart there remained only the bastions, which he strengthened and armed with artillery. The place of the curtains was supplied by wet ditches and strong palisades; and in front of the faubourgs he erected strong palisades, with large redoubts in front armed with heavy artillery. On the right bank, where the Neustadt, or new town, was situated, fortifications of a similar kind were erected, connected with the other side, in addition to the old bridge, by two new ones erected for the occasion. To these means of defence were added immense magazines of provisions capable of supporting 30,000 men for several months, in addition to the 16,000 sick and wounded who already encumbered the hospitals. He designed to make this fortress, thus strengthened, the pivot of his offensive operations, from whence he could direct his blows at pleasure against the enemy, either on the right or left bank of the river; and he calculated that 30,000 men could maintain themselves there for fifteen days, against any force the Allies could bring against it.[1]

[1] Odel. i. 256; Fain, ii. 24; Thiers, xvi. 35-38.

33. His works at Torgau, Wittenberg, and Magdeburg.

Torgau and Wittenberg were the next of the fortresses on the Elbe which attracted the Emperor's attention. Several thousand Saxon peasants were immediately employed night and day in strengthening the fortifications of these places, which it was calculated would be in a complete posture of defence in seven or eight weeks. Vast hospitals were at the same time formed in both towns, especially the former, for the reception of the sick and wounded of the immense host which would be assembled around them. Magdeburg was in so perfect a state of defence, that nothing was awanting to add to its strength. The whole care of the Emperor was, therefore, directed to forming in it a double set of establishments

CHAP. IX. 1813.

alike indispensable to the success and health of the troops. The first of these was to provide buildings for the remounting and equipping of great part of the cavalry of the army, in particular the division of General Bourcier; and the second to render it the grand depot for the hospitals of the army. Napoleon expressed his intention, in his usual vigorous way, by saying that "he meant to convert Magdeburg entirely into stables and hospitals;" and he was very nearly as good as his word. The numerous convents, hospitals, and other public edifices of that town afforded every facility for carrying this design into execution. In addition to this, he proposed to station twenty thousand men in this central fortress, of whom five or six thousand were to form its garrison, and fourteen or fifteen thousand were to compose a movable column, intended as long as possible to keep the field in its vicinity, and preserve the communication between the fortresses on the Upper and the Lower Elbe.[1]

[1] Fain, ii. 23-27; Odel. i. 256; Thiers, xvi. 37-39.

34. His measures regarding Hamburg and Werben.

The principal fortress on the lower part of the river was Hamburg, which had been immensely strengthened by Marshal Davoust, who had extracted enormous contributions from its suffering inhabitants—the means of compelling them to forge their own chains. It was not a regular fortress like Magdeburg, but formed part of a vast intrenched camp, which, in the hands of Marshal Davoust, who had (including the Danish contingent) 40,000 men at his command, formed a very formidable position. But between Madgeburg and Hamburg there was a long interval, undefended by any strong place, which gave the Emperor much uneasiness. After repeated surveys and consultations with General Haxo, he made choice of Werben, a town on the Elbe, nearer Magdeburg than Hamburg, at the corner of the elbow which the Elbe makes when turning from the north to the west, and at the point of its course nearest to Berlin. He ordered there the immediate construction of a citadel, composed of earthworks and palisades, where 3000 men might be lodged,

and maintain themselves for a long time. These plans were meant to put in practice the maxim of Napoleon, that the line of a river was never to be *defended* but *offensively;* that is, by taking possession of all its passages, and taking advantage of them to threaten the enemy alike on his own bank, and, if a crossing was effected, on the side to which his troops had passed.[1]

[1] Thiers, xvi. 40, 41.

35. Immense exactions of Davoust at Hamburg.

Napoleon had ordered Marshal Davoust "to take a cruel vengeance for the revolt of the inhabitants of Hamburg, Lubeck, and Bremen, *to shoot immediately all the old senators,* the officers and soldiers of the Hanseatic Legion, the functionaries who had not contrived to escape, and then to make out a list of five hundred of the chief merchants, and to 'displace property,' in his own words, by confiscating their whole effects."[2] These barbarous orders, which, if literally executed, and followed as they of course would have been by reprisals, would have substituted for the humanity of European the barbarity of Eastern war, fortunately proved in great part incapable of execution. The most part of the delinquents who had been designed for execution had escaped into the Danish territory before the French had regained possession of the city; and after the first ebullition of the imperial wrath, Napoleon was not sorry of a pretext for substituting for the shedding of blood enormous contributions in money from the unfortunate inhabitants. The humanity or prudence of Marshal Davoust retarded the commencement of the bloody execution till the dark fit had passed away from the Emperor's mind; and it was well it did so, for a few days after the capture of the town he wrote to the Marshal: "If the day following your entry you had shot several, it would have been well; but now it is too late. *Pecuniary exactions are much more worth.*"[3] Accordingly, by his directions, the Marshal levied a contribution of 50,000,000 francs (£2,000,000) on the city of Hamburg, which at that period contained less than 80,000 inhabitants! an exaction equivalent to what

[2] See orders in Thiers, xvi. 41, 42.

[3] Napoleon to Marshal Davoust, June 6, 1813; Thiers, xvi. 43.

CHAP. IX. 1813.

£10,000,000 sterling would be on Manchester, or Glasgow, or Liverpool. As it was evidently impossible for such an enormous sum to be paid, even by the most distant instalments, in specie or paper, its contribution was thus allocated: 10,000,000 francs (£400,000) instantly in *specie*; 20,000,000 francs (£800,000) in bills; and the balance in articles of food, clothing, and military furnishings. The inhabitants of Hamburg, struck with consternation with these enormous exactions, made the most vehement remonstrances against them, and earnestly besought a remission of a large part; but the Marshal was inexorable, and the disconsolate citizens had to submit in silence to their hard fate, which for ten years after blasted the prosperity of their once flourishing community.[1]

[1] Malte Brun; Lab. 114; Capefigue, x. 271; Fain, ii. 47-49; Thiers, xvi. 43, 44.

36. Forces which Napoleon had collected by the middle of August.

It appears from the official returns in the War Office of Paris, given by M. Thiers, that the forces which Napoleon had collected for the campaign were enormous; much beyond what at the time was either suspected or deemed possible by the Allied powers. They amounted to the immense number of 400,000 combatants on the Elbe, of whom 60,000 were horse, with 1000 guns, besides 20,000 in Bavaria, and 80,000 in Italy; all in the field, and irrespective of the blockaded garrisons on the Oder and the Vistula, who were 100,000 men. In addition to this, the non-effectives in the rear, who, though not ready for the field at the moment, might be expected to become so in the course of the campaign, so as to fill up chasms and supply casualties, were 200,000 more. In all, 700,000 combatants; of whom, making the largest allowance for non-effectives, 500,000 might be reckoned on as available for the purpose of an active campaign.[2]

[2] Thiers, xvi. 55.

The plans of the Allies were fully arranged at Trachenberg by the Sovereigns of Russia and Prussia in person, together with the Crown Prince of Sweden, who hastened thither, and took an active part in the deliberations. The operations agreed on were as follows, and calculated

with no small ability to meet the circumstances under which they were placed. Immediately upon the declaration of war by Austria against Napoleon, which, after the result of the conference of Metternich with Napoleon, on 28th. June, was reckoned upon as certain, a force reckoned at 100,000 men, composed of Russians and Prussians, the *elite* of their respective armies, was to march out of Silesia through the chain of mountains which forms the northern boundary of Bohemia, and to proceed secretly and suddenly westward along their southern base, through the dominions of the Emperor Francis, towards the left bank of the Moldau, there to join the Austrian army, and from that new base to act upon Napoleon's communications in Saxony, and in rear of the line of the Elbe. Meanwhile a force of 80,000 Russians and Prussians, partly composed of landwehr, was to remain in Silesia, under the command of General Blucher, to keep possession of that province, and cover the great line of communication through Poland with Russia. On this road large but still distant reserves were coming up from Russia to support that commander, whose instructions were to avoid a general action in the mean time, especially against superior numbers. The Army of the North, which was 80,000 strong, composed of some regular Russians and Cossacks, large bodies of Prussians, chiefly landwehr, and Hanoverian levies, was intrusted in the first instance with the defence of Berlin; and if the operations of the Grand Army should transfer the seat of war to the left bank of the Elbe, they were then to cross that river, and co-operate in a general attack on the enemy. In the mean time his Cossacks and light troops, about 10,000 in number, were to cross the river and threaten the enemy's communications, at the same time endeavouring to excite insurrections in Hesse, Westphalia, and all the German provinces between the Elbe and the Rhine.[1]

37. Plan of operations agreed on by the Allies at Trachenberg. June 12.

[1] Cathcart, 198-200; Lond. 372.

The Allied army, which was in a condition to take the

CHAP. IX.

1813.

38. Forces of the Allies at the resumption of hostilities.

field in July 1813, was 50,000 short of the French; it amounted at the very utmost to 340,000 or 350,000 men; while the latter had 390,000 combatants arrayed around their eagles. This deficiency, which was by no means expected, and threatened the Allied cause with the most serious danger, arose chiefly from the Austrian troops ready for the field being somewhat less than had been represented to the Allied sovereigns; those in Bohemia ready for action, instead of 150,000, which Metternich held out, were only 90,000.* This arose from the prostration of the military strength of Austria after the battle of Wagram, which the embarrassed state of its finances had prevented its Government from restoring before the Russian catastrophe, and the great distance of the most warlike province of the empire, which long retarded the formation and concentration of its military force when war was determined on in July 1813. Great part of the troops also which were brought up were raw levies, little qualified to withstand the shock of Napoleon's *corps d'elite*. The cavalry alone was in excellent condition, and presented a magnificent body of men, which did good service in the campaign which followed. The Prussian troops, great part of whom were landwehr, recently called from the plough, were full of enthusiasm, and universally animated by the most determined spirit; but although these heroic resolves might carry them through the dangers of

* Cathcart estimates the Austrian force which was ready for the field, as low as 45,000 men; but Sir Robert Wilson, the British Commissioner at the Austrian headquarters, states that *he saw* 60,000 infantry and 6000 cavalry (ii. 83) reviewed on the 19th August at Prague; whilst Kleinau's corps, and three divisions of light troops along the frontier, were absent. He estimates the Austrian army in Bohemia at this time at 115,000 men (ii. 86). His experience as a practical soldier, and his intimate acquaintance with the staff of the Austrian army during this campaign, which gave him constant access to the *real working field-states* (as contradistinguished from the official bulletins) *of that force*, render his authority upon this point decisive. Sir Charles Stewart, whose long experience as Wellington's Adjutant-General rendered him peculiarly qualified to judge as to numbers, entirely confirms Wilson's estimate.—See LOND. 106. This would make the disposable Austrian field force 90,000 at least. Even after all the loss at Leipsic, Austria had (on the 29th October 1813) 106,000 men in the field.—WILSON, ii. 206.

the field, it was much to be feared they would not be equally efficacious in enabling them to undergo the fatigues of a campaign, or withstand the contagion of the hospital or the bivouac. The main strength of the Allied force was to be found in the Russians, who were 120,000 strong, of whom 15,000 were cavalry, with 300 guns. A considerable part of their force was composed of iron veterans, who had gone through the campaign of 1812, and might be confidently relied on in any emergency.[1]

[1] Wilson, ii. 86; Cathcart, 191-193; Lond. 96.

39. Napoleon's plan of operations for the campaign.

Relying on his great numerical superiority, Napoleon's plan of operation was framed, as already noticed, on the following principles. Resting on the fortresses of Lilienstein, Koenigstein, Dresden, Torgau, Wittenberg, and Magdeburg, which gave him the entire command of the river, and enabled him to debouch at pleasure with an overwhelming force on either bank, he was resolved to await calmly in his central, and in great part impregnable, position, the time when the Allies, occupying the exterior circle, would "commit some fault of which he would instantly take advantage to fall on and destroy them." Master of all the passages over the river, and with a disposable force greater than that to which he was opposed, he had it in his power at any time to direct a greatly superior body of troops against any of the three armies which menaced him; and they had no *point d'appui* in case of disaster, while he, in case of reverse, had a secure refuge under the guns of the fortress from which his troops had issued.

40. Plan of the campaign of the Allies.

Perfectly aware of Napoleon's system of military tactics, and the important use he would not fail to make of the central fortresses and interior line of communication which he had at his command, the plan of the campaign adopted by the Allies at Trachenberg was the best that could possibly have been adopted to meet his designs, and was of the following import. All the three armies were simultaneously to assume the offensive: the

CHAP. IX. 1813.

Grand Army in Bohemia, 180,000 strong, taking the lead, and threatening the enemy's communications by a descent into Saxony, on the direct line from Dresden to Mayence. But to avoid the obvious danger of an attack on one of them by Napoleon in person at the head of an overwhelming force, their commanders received orders, whenever they became aware, from the activity of the operations, and the presence of the Imperial Guard and reserve cavalry in any quarter, that the Emperor himself was present, immediately to retire, and continue falling back so long as the pursuit was vigorously continued. Meanwhile, the other armies, relieved of the Emperor's attack in person, were to press on, and use the utmost endeavour to intercept his communications. In this way it was hoped the advantage to be derived from his command of the river and central fortresses would be in a great degree neutralised, or rather turned to his detriment: because the *elite* of his army, obliged in this manner to cross and recross the river, and fly from one menaced point to another, would become worn out by constant marches and counter-marches; and their supplies, how great soever in the outset, would be exhausted ere long, from their foraging being necessarily confined to a comparatively limited sphere *within* the exterior circle. On the other hand, these dangers were to be apprehended in a much inferior degree by the Allies, as their communications with the rear were all open, and supplies to any amount might be obtained from the fertile fields of Silesia, Poland, Bohemia, and Bavaria.[1]

[1] Sir Chas. Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, Aug. 14, 1813, MS.; Lond. 372; St Cyr, iv. 348.

41. State of the negotiations with Austria. June 1813.

When such military preparations were going on on both sides, it is evident that it was more a work of dissimulation than anything else to carry on negotiations either at Reichenbach or Prague, and that both France and Austria, under colour of pacific intentions, were in reality only striving to gain time for their warlike preparations. Yet was the negotiation between the Allies and Austria for long by no means on the amicable foot-

ing which was desirable; on the contrary, it was at one period on the point of miscarrying, on account of the refusal of England to give any subsidy to the Court of Vienna, and the doubts entertained of the good faith of Bernadotte in consequence of his allowing Hamburg to fall into the hands of the French without striking a blow. The truth was, the British Government entertained at this period serious doubts as to the intentions of Metternich, chiefly from the part he had taken in promoting the family alliance between the imperial families of France and Austria, and the adherence of the Cabinet of Vienna to that of the Tuileries during the eventful crisis of the Russian war. For these reasons, the British Government, in the first instance, refused to give any subsidy to Austria, even if she took a part in the war; and this refusal gave great umbrage to the Cabinet of Vienna, especially considering the large sum Great Britain was at the same time advancing to Russia, Prussia, and Sweden. Fortunately, Sir Charles Stewart had by this time come to the Allied headquarters at Reichenbach, and he made Lord Castlereagh fully aware of the mischievous effects which their declinature was producing on the prospects of the alliance, and the necessity of an immediate advance to enable Austria to take the field. The letter which he wrote to his brother at this crisis is highly valuable, and throws an important light both on the critical state of the European alliance at this period, and the great share which both brothers had in cementings its fortunes.*

* "DEAREST CASTLEREAGH,—Count Hardenberg has arrived from Vienna, and Mr Humboldt. I have had many conversations with both. Both have hopes; but I will not vouch for the solidity of the basis on which they are rested. It seems now that Metternich is valiant, and that the Emperor Francis is the timid person. To wind him up to a proper key—to pat him on the back and to commit him, decidedly is the present aim. To accomplish this, it is necessary to hold the stoutest language: to declare that even without him the war will be carried on; to clench treaties for succour more binding with England; and, in short, to look only to war. Upon this policy they are now acting. How it will answer is in the womb of time. His Imperial Majesty, Francis, does not see things so advantageously as is desirable; and when it is pointed out to him that a movement in Buonaparte's rear with the

CHAP. IX.

1813.

42. Intrepid conduct of Lord Cathcart and Sir Chas. Stewart in regard to an Austrian subsidy.

But although both Lord Cathcart and Sir Charles Stewart, who were on the spot, were agreed as to the absolute necessity of an immediate advance of money to enable Austria to take the field, yet that necessity was not equally apparent to the British Cabinet at home, who, already embarrassed by the enormous expense of the Peninsular war, found their resources seriously diminished by the monetary and commercial crisis in which, from the universal hostility on the Continent, the British commerce

Austrian force would annihilate his son-in-law, he rather looks to his reigning in those limits which peaceable arrangements may bring about.

"Count Stadion declared yesterday that the Emperor Francis had positively refused a meeting with Buonaparte, which the latter had urged. If this is the case, the visits of the Russian Emperor and the King of Prussia will be equally declined. . . . The arrival of the news of the armistice at Leipsic was very *mal apropos*. A great victory would have been gained then by Woronzoff. When it was received, the Prussian officers were so indignant that they tore off their pelisses and trampled them under foot. Count Stadion received reports yesterday from Count Bubna at Dresden, which positively assert that the loss of the French army since the opening of the campaign amounts at least to 60,000 men. Buonaparte is anxious to have it believed that it only depends on him to negotiate separately with Russia. In my official despatches, you will see the progress and conclusion of our treaties. I shall always lament the dilatory proceedings attending their completion. They should have been finished at Dresden or Grossberg, and we could then have done it without difficulty, and should have been then free from the accompanying explanations. But this I could not rectify. Although you may not now carry us through our signatures, still if we had not concluded, the alternative would have been an incapacity in Prussia to continue her preparations, the direct loss of Austria, and Russia looking to her own frontier. As it is, we have the hope Buonaparte will spurn the propositions made. We could not wait for orders from home. We give our game the last chance, and if the worst happen we need never be a party to the pacific negotiation; and if we are left in the lurch, it is not without having done our utmost. The loss of a part of our subsidy need not signify.

"With regard to the numbers to be kept up by the Allies, Prussia to the last would have inserted 100,000 men, and Russia alone prevented this. It may be said Prussia was engaged by her former treaty with Russia to furnish 80,000 men, and that we get no more by our subsidy. But the fact is, that it would be quite impossible for Prussia to make good the losses she has sustained since the commencement of hostilities, and to bring up her effective in the field to 80,000 men without England's aid. But with what has been given I am sure she will be brought up to the very utmost mark. I cannot conceal from you that Lord C.'s [Cathcart] extraordinary partiality to Russia will never let him see a greater exertion in another quarter than he can accomplish; therefore, the lower number was inserted in the treaty even after the higher had been three times inserted. I was obliged to be obedient as to 80,000, as Russia would not go higher. I fear you will be much disappointed; but I act under orders. I hope my hussar proceedings as to an advance will not

had come to be involved. The strenuous representations, in consequence, of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, had compelled Lord Castlereagh, much against his will, to refuse, in the most positive manner, any, even the most inconsiderable, advance to Austria; and even in regard to the payments to Prussia, they were directed to be made in the most cautious manner. The necessities of Austria, however, were still more pressing, and a certain advance of money was indispensable to enable her to put her troops in motion. Matters were thus very near coming to a fix; and the danger was imminent that, at the decisive moment, Austria, needy and sullen at the refusal of aid she had experienced, would draw off, or even unite her forces to those of the enemy. In this extremity, the moral courage of Lord Cathcart and Sir Charles Stewart was put to the test, and fortunately it proved equal to the crisis. On the 16th June they signed a secret article to the treaty of Reichenbach, without any direct authority from the British Cabinet, but which they felt assured would not be disavowed, by which it was stipulated that, in the event of Napoleon declining the terms of accommodation proposed by Austria, "she [Austria] should, in the event of her taking a part in the war, receive £500,000 in bills upon London, and the like sum in military stores and accoutrements; that she should bring 200,000 men into the field, and be restored to the condition in which she was in 1803, or, at any rate, at the Peace of Presburg; and that the Pope

June 16.

electrify you. The fact is, Prussia cannot go on just now without a lift; the machine is really at a stand for want of oil.

"It may be right to put you in possession of the arguments that are used by those who do not press Austria so much forward as we would desire. It is said the positive refusal of England to give any subsidy has created in Metternich great dissatisfaction; that even the name of a small subsidy, in the event of their acting, would be of immense importance. The non-interference also of Sweden, up to the present time, upon whom they say we have expended our millions, and her suffering Hamburg to fall, is urged as a reason for Austria keeping back; she having originally stipulated, as one of the conditions that would induce her to take a part, the employment of a large Swedish army on the Lower Elbe."—SIR CHARLES STEWART *to* LORD CASTLEREAGH, *Reichenbach, June* 16, 1813 (*Most private and secret*), *MS.*

CHAP. IX. 1813.

should be reinstated in his dominions." This clause had been drawn up under Count Stadion's eyes, in the treaty between Prussia, Austria, and Great Britain, but without the signature of any one on the part of Austria. The Emperor Francis declined to sign it, as long as any hope remained of Napoleon's acceding to the terms proposed by him for a general pacification. But at length, when these hopes had entirely vanished from the determined resolution of the French Emperor, he gave his consent to the secret article on 27th July, and thereby conditionally incorporated Austria with the Grand Alliance.[1]

July 27.

[1] Hard. xii. 184; Schoell, x. 257; Lond. 368, Appendix, No. III.

43. Change of policy on the part of Bernadotte.

Fortunately about this time a ray of light broke in from the quarter where it was least expected, and which contributed to remove the indecision of Austria, and cement the union of the Allied powers. Bernadotte, whose backwardness in the general cause, especially in regard to Hamburg, had given rise to serious suspicions, not only in the breast of Sir Charles Stewart, but of the Allied sovereigns, suddenly changed his policy, and professed his willingness, not merely to repair to Trachenberg to concert measures with them, but to act with his whole force upon the lines most important to the Allied cause.* The cause of this sudden and auspicious change was, that secret information was received at this period that, in the event of the resumption of hostilities, one of Napoleon's first measures would be directed against Berlin and the Prince Royal of Sweden. For this purpose, the corps of Bertrand, Oudinot, and Reynier, with one of cavalry, mustering

* "My Dear Stewart,—The Prince Royal having entered into the most extended plan of co-operation which could be desired by the Emperor and King of Prussia, and having offered to act with the means within his reach upon the line of operations most interesting to them, I trust, my good friend, you will do everything in your power to cause every man of new or old troops to be placed at his absolute disposal, which are on this side of the line of demarcation. Whatever the quality of the troops may be, one advantage at least will arise—that of the whole being made to act with decision upon one system, and under the direction of one general. If, during the armistice, you can see the Prince Royal, I shall be glad of it. He looks upon you as a real soldier, which with him is a high degree of estimation."—General Alexander Hope, *Envoy to Sweden, to* Sir Charles Stewart, *Stralsund, June* 11, 1813, *MS.*

70,000 combatants, was to be advanced against Berlin, supported by Girard from Madgeburg, and Davoust from Hamburg, forming a force in all of little less than 100,000. Against this force Bernadotte could not oppose more than 70,000; so that he had much need to conciliate the Allied sovereigns to avoid destruction. Upon receipt of this intelligence, he entered warmly into the views of the Allied sovereigns, and repaired forthwith to Trachenberg in person to concert with them the plan of operations. He was there received with the utmost distinction by the Allied sovereigns, and a stronger head than his might have been carried away by the incense bestowed upon him. From hence, however, arose a fresh set of difficulties; for he openly aspired to the command-in-chief of the Allied armies, or at least of that portion of them which acted in Prussia and on the Lower Elbe. It was no easy matter to reconcile these pretensions with the preponderance of Russia in the councils of the Coalition, and the just demands of Prussia for the lead in defence of her own country; but at length the matter was adjusted, though not without difficulty, by giving the Prince Royal the command of the Army of the North, charged with the defence of Berlin, with Prince William and Prince Henry of Prussia serving under him to be a check upon his actions.* But though Bernadotte was treated with such distinc-

* "Prince William and Prince Henry of Prussia are to serve in the army which is to be placed under the Prince Royal. This is the policy of Prussia, lest the Prince Royal, once he has the army, should made himself too powerful. . . . My friend Hardenberg is strong in power and favour, although he has collected in his person the management of every office in the state, and although he is nearly seventy years of age, and very deaf. Still he brings the affairs of the country forward; and, from what I hear, the interests of Great Britain in the alliance could not be intrusted to better hands. The loss of Scharnhorst has been a great misfortune; his principles, as well as his abilities, are so striking, that I wish all military arrangements were solely under his control. Kniesebeck has considerable military ability, but he is supposed to be favourable to peace, and hostile to Russia. The game evidently playing now is to unite Prussia with Austria, and to separate her as much as possible from Russia."—SIR CHARLES STEWART *to* LORD CASTLEREAGH, *June* 26, 1813, *MS.*

CHAP. IX.

1813.

tion, and invested with so important a command, the plan of the campaign adopted was not his, but that of the Russian and Prussian generals, who, long opposed to Napoleon, had come to learn the proper mode of combating his system of warfare.[1]

[1] Thiers, xvi. 186; Lond. 87-91.

41. Treacherous attack on the free corps of Lutzow and the poet Körner. June 16.

A barbarous piece of treacherous cruelty practised by the French at this period powerfully contributed to inflame the already ardent feelings of the Prussians at this time: It is thus narrated by Sir Charles Stewart: "A circumstance which has occurred to the free corps of Lutzow has excited the greatest possible indignation here. This corps was acting in the enemy's rear, when, hearing of the armistice, they desired to have a free passage from the neighbourhood of Hoff to the right bank of the Elbe. The French general received them, and promised them a safe conduct. He treacherously, however, on their march, fell upon them with superior forces, and with difficulty two-thirds of the corps escaped. The general gave as his excuse that he had received particular orders from Buonaparte that the armistice excluded those who carried on war like marauders in the rear of their opponents, and that the free corps should be everywhere treated with the greatest severity. This scandalous proceeding is a fair ground for immediately breaking the armistice, but it is hard to say how it will be viewed at the seat of judgment. The people of Leipsic are so exasperated against the French that they have declared the city in a state of siege."[2] So far Sir Charles Stewart: but, unknown to him, the event was destined to acquire enduring celebrity from what there befell a man of immortal fame. Among those wounded on this occasion, was the poet Körner, whose patriotic strains had rung like a trumpet to the heart of Germany, and who had advanced to parley with the French general, whom he assured of the armistice. But the perfidious barbarian, exclaiming, "The armistice is for all the world except you," cut him down before he had time even to draw his sword. Körner fell back in his saddle on receiv-

[2] Sir Chas. Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, June 26, 1813, MS.

ing the blow, which severely wounded him on the head, and was quickly followed by a second, by which he was wellnigh stunned. His horse, which was a very powerful courageous animal, however, carried him in an almost senseless state into a neighbouring wood, where one of his companions overtook him, and was proceeding to bind up his wound, when a party of the enemy rode up. Without losing his presence of mind, Körner immediately called out in a loud voice, "Let the four squadrons advance." The enemy were deceived by the stratagem and retired, upon which Körner withdrew into the recesses of the wood and escaped. He was from thence conveyed during the night to the house of a peasant in the neighbourhood, by whom he was kindly treated; and he was afterwards taken secretly to the house of Dr Wingfield, in Leipsic, who, with generous devotion, put in hazard his own life to save that of his friend. He recovered so far as to be able to resume his military duties, and take a part in the battle of Dresden, where he was shot through the heart. A few days before his death, he composed his immortal ode to his *Lyre and Sword*—the noblest of all the noble lyrical pieces which his genius at that crisis created to aid in the liberation of the Fatherland.[1]

[1] Werke, i. 40, 41; Deutsche Pandora von Fred. Kolle, 413; Biog. Univ. Sup. voce Körner.

45. Sir Charles Stewart's gloomy views of the negotiations.

There can be no doubt that Sir Charles Stewart was right in saying that this treacherous act afforded a good ground for breaking the armistice, but that it was very doubtful how it would be taken at headquarters. In truth, at this period it was more than doubtful whether a general pacification was not at hand; or, at least, whether Austria would not immediately come to pacific terms with Napoleon. The anxiety which prevailed at the Allied headquarters at this time on this subject was extreme. They knew that a secret negotiation was going on between the Cabinet of Vienna and the French Emperor, and that Metternich had come to Dresden to conduct it in person with him; and they were ignorant of what had passed at the private interview between them, which rendered all

CHAP. IX. 1813.

prospect of a good understanding hopeless. Sir Charles Stewart, accordingly, at this period wrote from the Allied headquarters to Lord Castlereagh that a mystery hung over the negotiations which he could not penetrate; that a secret understanding existed between France and Austria; and that the independence of Europe was about to be sacrificed to "some miserable expedient for temporary tranquillity."* In truth, Sir Charles Stewart's penetration was by no means at fault on this occasion; the danger which he divined and dreaded existed in its fullest extent, and to a degree greater than he suspected. It lay with Napoleon at this period by a word, and at a trifling sacrifice, not only to disarm the hostility of Austria, but convert her into a firm ally. Nothing hindered this from taking place but his indomitable pride and firmness, which could not brook even the semblance of defeat.

46. Napoleon's delay in sending plenipotentiaries to Prague.

Though secretly determined, however, not to accept the proposals of Austria, Napoleon had no pretext, after Russia and Prussia had accepted the mediation of that power, for delaying to send plenipotentiaries to Prague, the agreed-on place of assembly. He nominated, accordingly, M. de Narbonne and M. de Caulaincourt to represent France at the approaching congress. M. d'Anstett

* "I was much besieged by Chancellor Hardenberg to increase the issue of £100,000, as you will see by the enclosed note. I have, however, more peremptorily resisted this, since I find there is still some mystery as to the negotiations which I cannot entirely develop. I know not what Sweden may say to these proceedings, but I understand she has accepted the Austrian mediation; but she is kept very much in the dark. And when I review all I have seen and heard, it is my firm belief some pacific arrangement will be made, it is so evident that Austria, who has the chief power, is forming this. It is clear that, though she approves of the principle of resistance to a certain extent against France, she by no means goes along with England in her views as to Buonaparte's power being more confined. It is incontrovertible that a secret understanding exists between the French and Austrian Cabinets, and out of all this I think one must be blind not to foretell that some miserable expedient for temporary tranquillity will be resorted to. I have good reason since I began this letter to believe what *I have mentioned as to the Prince Royal's communications is correct.* We must judge him from the future, not the past."—SIR CHARLES STEWART *to* LORD CASTLEREAGH, *Berlin, June* 26, 1813, *MS.*

represented Russia, and M. de Humboldt, Prussia, at the congress; and from the high character of all these diplomatists, it was confidently expected that the negotiations would make rapid progress, and possibly terminate in a fortunate result. But this illusion was not of long duration. The Russian, Prussian, and Austrian plenipotentiaries arrived at Prague on the 12th July, the time appointed, and M. de Narbonne also made his appearance. But M. de Caulaincourt, to their astonishment, did not arrive, and his absence prevented anything being done. After waiting in vain till the 18th, they were surprised, instead of the absent plenipotentiary, at receiving a despatch from Napoleon, dated Dresden, 17th July, in which he complained that at Neumarkt General Barclay de Tolly had declared that he considered the armistice as lasting only till the 10th August instead of the 17th, the expiry of the period allowed for denouncing the armistice, and that he must receive satisfaction on so important a point before he sent M. de Caulaincourt to commence the negotiations. He complained also that M. d'Anstett and M. de Humboldt were *not of the rank* which was required for those who were to meet M. de Narbonne and the Duke of Vicenza (Caulaincourt). Both objections were obviously unfounded. Barclay de Tolly was merely a military commander, who had no authority to say anything as to the duration of the armistice, which it would be time enough to discuss when the period of its expiry drew near. And as to the rank of the diplomatists—an objection which sounded strange from the child of the Revolution—M. de Humboldt, of ancient family, and brother of the illustrious naturalist, famed over the whole world, was at least on a level with either Maret or Caulaincourt, neither of whom had any pretensions to aristocratic descent. As it was, however, these objections gave rise to an angry correspondence, which was not terminated till the 28th, when Caulaincourt, who had only been permitted to quit Dresden on the 26th, having arrived, the

CHAP. IX. 1813.

conferences were allowed to go on. This factious resistance upon trifling points strengthened greatly the arguments of those who contended that Napoleon was altogether insincere in the conference, and that he was laying hold of every pretext to prolong the armistice, in order to gain time for his military preparations being completed.[1]

[1] Fain, ii. 209; Thiers, xvi. 147, 148.

47. Fresh difficulty raised by Napoleon as to the form of the conferences. July 28.

In the meanwhile, previous to M. de Caulaincourt's arrival, Napoleon started another difficulty, which, though of form only, was of such a kind as stopped altogether, in the mean time, the commencement of the negotiations. Metternich proposed that, when the conferences were opened, the mode adopted in the negotiations of Tetschen in 1779 should be followed—viz., by written notes, addressed not by the belligerent parties to each other, but by both to the mediating power, and by it transmitted to the plenipotentiary of the power for whom it was really intended. To this proposition the Allied plenipotentiaries, anxious to conciliate Austria, at once agreed; but M. de Narbonne contended for that pursued at the conferences of Utrecht, where the plenipotentiaries sent their notes directly to each other, and the communications were carried on partly verbally, partly in writing. It was obviously a matter of little consequence which form was adopted, as the notes to be exchanged were the same whether they were to be addressed by the belligerents to each other or to the mediating power; but Napoleon was firm in insisting for his side of the question; and as the fatal term of the 16th August was approaching, M. de Metternich, who had become seriously alarmed that the negotiations would come to nothing, requested and obtained a secret conference with M. de Narbonne, the particulars of which, happily preserved in the archives of the Austrian statesman, are of the highest interest and importance.[2]

[2] See official correspondence in Fain, ii. 200; Thiers, xvi. 156, 157.

"The difficulty now raised," said M. de Metternich, "is not more serious than that which has been discussed. We have announced to you officially that the convention is

ratified, in virtue of which the armistice is prolonged to the 16th August; this, therefore, could never give you a reason for withholding the nominating of your plenipotentiaries when ours arrived on the evening of the 11th July. Now the commissioners at Neumarkt, who know nothing of the matter, and have all the passions of military staffs, pretend to interpret the clause differently, and you *pretend* to be alarmed at it. I say 'pretend,' for you cannot seriously believe what you advance. You rest on an insignificant difficulty, which is entirely without foundation, as not only the Russian and Prussian plenipotentiaries, but the mediating power, are on your side of that question. In these circumstances we can see nothing in such conduct, when time is so precious, but a desire on the part of the Emperor Napoleon to keep us here without doing anything till the conclusion of the armistice. But do not deceive yourselves; you will not by so doing prolong the suspension of arms by one hour. By the difficulties which you say you have encountered at Neumarkt, you may judge of the difficulty which we have had in getting the armistice prolonged even to the 10th August. Rely upon it you will obtain no second suspension; let not the Emperor Napoleon deceive himself on so important a point. In such an event we shall not remain neutral; rest assured of that. After having from the very first employed every possible means to bring him to reasonable conditions—which he well knows we have communicated to him from the first moment, and on which we have never for an instant varied, for they constitute the only possible basis for the peace of Europe—we have no alternative if he refuses but to become belligerents ourselves. If we remain neutral, as he in reality desires, the Allies, we know, will be beaten; but we do not deceive ourselves, our turn will come next, and we shall have well merited the fate that awaits us. We shall not commit that fault. At present, whatever you may be told to the contrary, we are free. I give you my word of honour, as

48. Secret conference of Metternich and Narbonne.

CHAP. IX. 1813.

well as that of my Sovereign, that we have no engagements with any one. But I give you my word at the same time, that at midnight on the 10th August we shall be engaged with all the world except you, and that on the morning of the 17th you will have three hundred thousand Austrians the more on your hands. It is not lightly, or without pain, for my Sovereign is a father, and loves his daughter, that he has taken this resolution; but he owes it to his people, to himself, and to Europe, to restore to all a stable state of things, since he has it in his power to do so. He has no other alternative but to fall a few days later under your blows into a state of dependence more lamentable than that in which you have put Prussia. Certainly we are not blind to the risks we run in combating, even with large armies, the Emperor Napoleon at the head of the French troops; but after having duly reflected on the matter, we prefer that chance to dishonour and slavery. Do not come, then, after the event and say we have deceived you! Till midnight on the 10th, everything is possible, even to the eleventh hour; but midnight past, not a day, not an instant of respite; instant war with all the world, even with us."

[1] Thiers, xvi. 151, 152, from Metternich's archives.

"What!" said Narbonne, "not an instant of respite, even if a negotiation has commenced?" "On one condition only—that the entire basis of peace has been arranged, and that nothing remains to settle but the details."[1]

49. M. de Narbonne in vain tries to persuade Napoleon of his danger.

M. de Narbonne readily perceived, from the earnest manner, solemn voice, and emphatic assurances of M. de Metternich, that he spoke with sincerity the resolution of his Cabinet, and he was seized, in consequence, with the most mortal apprehensions as to the fate which awaited his Imperial master. Under the influence of these impressions, he wrote to Napoleon giving an account of what had passed, and urging the necessity of immediately sending M. de Caulaincourt to Prague, with full powers to begin the negotiation in good earnest; warning him, at the same time, that if everything was not

concluded by the 10th at midnight, renewed war with Austria in addition was inevitable. Napoleon, to whose secret thoughts Maret alone was privy, attached no credit to these representations, and if he had believed, he was determined not to act upon them. Still he was not the less desirous to gain as much time as he possibly could, and with this view, he resolved on the following plan. He sent powers to M. de Narbonne to commence the negotiation without M. de Caulaincourt, and enjoined him to propose as the basis of the negotiation, which he offered to conduct by means of written proposals, the principle of *uti possidetis*. As the French Emperor was in possession at this time of more than the half of Germany and the whole of Italy, there was little chance of its being admitted by the Allied Powers; and this was rendered still more unlikely by what he at the same time insisted on, in regard to the blockaded fortresses. He required that French officers should be sent to all of them to superintend the supply of provisions, and that a return should be furnished for 50,000 men and 6000 horses, in the fortresses on the Oder—numbers considerably superior to the garrisons, and to what had hitherto been provided under the stipulations of the armistice. The Emperor of Russia said he would not agree to this, and Napoleon stated in reply, that if it was refused he would instantly recommence hostilities. The matter was at length adjusted by mutual concessions, but in the mean time, some days were consumed in these preliminary points, and July expired without the negotiations having advanced a single step. The designs of Napoleon were quite fixed; he proposed to amuse the Allied Powers by simulate proposals for peace to the very last moment, and when this could no longer avail, to open a separate and secret negotiation with Austria, which might delay for a few days longer the commencement of hostilities with that power, during which he hoped to succeed in crushing Russia and Prussia in a pitched battle. The

CHAP. IX. 1813.

instructions to Caulaincourt, who was not to quit Dresden till the 26th, accordingly pointed to a separate treaty with Austria, but by no means to a general peace. The powers previously sent to Narbonne had been so restricted that Maret, in despatching them, wrote on the envelope: "I send you more *powers* than *power*; your hands are bound, but your feet and mouth are free, and you may walk about and dine."[1]

[1] Thiers, xvi. 133, 134; Sir Charles Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, July 28, 1813, MS.

50. Napoleon goes to Mayence to meet the Empress.

Instead of remaining at Dresden to conduct the negotiation in person, or giving full powers to either M. de Narbonne or M. de Caulaincourt to conduct it for him, Napoleon, on the night of the 24th July, set out for Mayence, whither the Empress had come to meet him, for the double purpose of seeing her before the campaign commenced, and of inspecting the troops which were continually passing through that fortress on their way to Dresden. What passed on this occasion is now known by the best of all evidence, that of the Empress herself: "Associated," said she to the Senate, "in that short interview with the most secret thoughts of the Emperor, I then perceived with what sentiments he would be inspired if seated on a dishonoured throne, and under a crown without glory." In these words is revealed the inmost soul of Napoleon. "He was much urged by the Empress," says Sir Charles Stewart, "to make peace on any terms, but he answered, TOUT OU RIEN."[2] The Emperor spent six days at Mayence, busied in inspecting the fortifications and reviewing the troops which were incessantly urged on to swell the roll of the corps on the Elbe, and on the 4th August he returned in person to Dresden. During his stay at Mayence, he received several letters from Caulaincourt complaining bitterly of the illusory nature of the powers with which he was invested and the instruction which he had received, but without the slightest effect.[3]

[2] Lond. 108.

August 4.

[3] Fain, ii. 56, 57; Odel. i. 228-231; Bign. xii. 203, 204; Thiers, xvi. 159-163.

Upon Napoleon's return to Dresden, he ascertained from Maret and Caulaincourt that the pretexts for delay

would no longer avail, and that it was necessary to come to a categorical answer to the final proposals of Austria as the mediating power. He despatched, accordingly, confidential instructions to M. de Caulaincourt, directing him (without acquainting M. de Narbonne) to open a secret negotiation with Metternich, and ascertain from him on what terms his Government really would treat. The Austrian diplomatist immediately (6th August) repaired to Brandeiss, where the Emperor Francis was, to lay the matter before him. This was exactly what the Cabinet of Vienna desired, and they directed Metternich, in consequence, to communicate their views to Napoleon. A secret meeting for this purpose was arranged between Caulaincourt and Metternich, on the 8th August, at which the proposals of Austria, which were substantially the same she had always urged, were again brought forward by the latter. They were, that "the Grand Duchy of Warsaw was to be dissolved and divided between Russia, Austria, and Prussia, Dantzic being ceded to the latter power; that Hamburg and the Hanse towns should be re-established in their independence; the Protectorate of the Confederation of the Rhine renounced; Prussia reinstated in her ancient possessions, with a frontier on the Elbe; and the Illyrian provinces, including Trieste, be ceded to Austria." M. de Metternich accompanied this categorical demand with an intimation that the Emperor "awaited an answer, yes or no, till midnight on the 10th, which shall be done also by Russia and Prussia; but that if such an answer was not received by that time, on the morning of the 11th the congress would be dissolved by a public declaration, and the whole forces of Austria joined to those of the Coalition, to conquer a peace compatible with the interests of all the powers; and that, in that event, their proposals should be held as withdrawn, and everything left to the decision of the sword."[1] The instructions to this effect, signed by the Emperor of Austria, were shown by M. de Metternich to

51. Final proposals of Austria. August 6.

[1] See instructions in Thiers, xvi. 217, 218; Fain, ii. 93, 94; Bign. xii. 223-226.

CHAP. IX.

1813.

52. Noble conduct of M. de Caulaincourt.

M. de Caulaincourt, to leave no doubt in the mind of the latter of the gravity of the crisis which had arrived.

Caulaincourt acted a noble part on this occasion. He immediately, and the same evening, communicated the ultimatum to the Emperor, accompanied by a letter in which he earnestly besought him to accept it. At best, no stranger to the warlike resolutions of his master, and well aware that he was imperilling his own favour and fortune by tendering advice contrary to them, he had moral courage enough for the sake of his country to run the hazard. But it was all in vain. Nothing could persuade Napoleon that Austria would really join the Allies if her terms were not acceded to, or that there was any necessity for returning an answer to the Austrian ultimatum before midnight on the 10th, which was the appointed time for the termination of the armistice. He spent, accordingly, the whole of the 9th in deliberating, and on the forenoon of the 10th sent off an answer which was to the following effect: The French Emperor agreed to the dissolution of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, as a matter "on which the decree of Providence had been pronounced." He agreed, if Austria and Russia gave their consent, to cede the greater part, or even the whole of the Grand Duchy to Prussia; but he insisted that her frontiers should be thrown back behind the Oder; and that Brandenberg, Berlin, Potsdam, and the whole country between the Elbe and that river, should be given in compensation for the loss of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw to Saxony. Prussia thus reconstructed was to have for a capital either Warsaw or Königsberg; Dantzic, however, was to form no part of its dominions, but to be a free city. As to Hamburg, Bremen, and Lubeck, which had been incorporated with France by the title of the "32d Military Division," their cession was not to be thought of; they formed an irrevocable part of the territories of the Great Nation. He could not consent to divest himself of the title of Protector of the

Confederation of the Rhine; to demand it was a gratuitous insult to him, without adding anything to the security of the Allied Powers. He consented to the restoration of Illyria to Austria, but reserving Trieste to France, along with Villach Goritz, and some other military positions beyond the Julian Alps, which secured an easy entrance into that territory.* On these conditions he agreed to sign a peace, and withdraw with his forces behind the Rhine; but if they were rejected, in preference to agreeing to any others, "he would for years together combat Europe in arms." [1]

[1] Theirs, xvi. 222, 223.

53. Termination of the congress, and declaration of war by Austria against France. August 11.

Meanwhile, the most intense anxiety prevailed at the Austrian headquarters. Metternich in particular, who was well aware how little Austria was prepared for a war on a great scale, and what tremendous risks she would run if it were entered upon by her and prove unsuccessful, was in the utmost state of solicitude. He counted the hours as they struck during the whole of the 10th, and sent times innumerable to the hotel of M. de Narbonne, to inquire whether he had received any advices from his master. When night came on, and still the answer was the same, that no communication had been received, his anxiety became unbearable, and such as all his diplomatic power of dissimulation could not conceal. At length midnight struck, and the hour of decision had arrived: the terms of Austria having been rejected, or rather not acceded to, by the French Emperor, she was bound under her existing engagements with the Allied Powers to join her forces to theirs and declare war against France. He proved faithful to his word. Early on the morning of the 11th, he signed a convention binding Austria to unite her forces to those of the Coalition, and declare war against France.[2] At the same time, messengers were despatched to Napoleon at Dresden

[2] Bign. xii. 233-249; Thiers, xvi. 225, 226.

* Caulaincourt was authorised in the *last extremity* to consent to Prussia's retaining what she already possessed, between the Elbe and the Oder, in addition to her gains on the side of Poland; but this was the only concession authorised to him.

CHAP. IX. 1813.

announcing the dissolution of the congress, and the accession of Austria to the confederacy; and on the day following Austria declared war.

54. Napoleon tries in vain to engage Austria in a further secret negotiation. August 11.

Napoleon was taken by surprise by this decisive step; he was far from having anticipated so bold a determination on the part of the Cabinet of Vienna. Still he was not without hopes of yet bringing matters to an adjustment in conformity with his wishes. There still remained the chance of the secret negotiation begun through M. de Caulaincourt with the Cabinet of Vienna; and he hoped by means of it to postpone hostilities for a few days, or weeks, with Austria, during which he had no doubt of gaining such successes over the Allies as would render that Government disposed to accede to his terms. The courier with the last views and ultimatum of Napoleon, communicated in secret to M. de Bubna, arrived at midday of the 11th, after the accession of Austria to the Coalition had been signed. M. de Caulaincourt, however, did not despair of getting Austria to continue the secret and separate negotiations, and, immediately on receipt of the Emperor's answer, hastened to M. de Metternich, and endeavoured to persuade him to keep open the secret conferences, and delay the declaration of war till it was seen whether an accommodation could not be made on the footing of the last French proposals. But the answer of M. de Metternich was decided. He declared that the conditions, with the exception of a few details, might have been accepted as the basis of a negotiation on the preceding day, but that now it was too late. Nothing could be received or considered by Austria but in conjunction with the Allied Powers. And of their disposition, the clearest proof was afforded on the same day by the Russian and Prussian plenipotentiaries retiring from Prague, declaring the congress dissolved, and notifying the resumption of hostilities after midnight on the 16th.[1]

[1] Bign. xii. 237-249; Thiers, xvi. 226-227.

Still Napoleon did not despair of getting Austria to

postpone hostilities at least for a few days. When the Allied plenipotentiaries had withdrawn, there remained only M. de Caulaincourt and M. de Narbonne at Prague, who were in communication with the Austrian minister. Both these statesmen, however, were most anxious to bring about an accommodation, and warmly seconded the efforts of M. de Metternich to effect it. The better to compass this object, it was agreed that M. de Narbonne, as the sole ostensible plenipotentiary on the part of France at the congress, should alone withdraw from Prague, and that M. de Caulaincourt should remain there. It was given out that M. de Caulaincourt remained to await the issue of a communication made by M. de Metternich to the Emperor of Russia and King of Prussia. But it was all in vain. The French Emperor consented to M. de Caulaincourt remaining a few days longer, not in Prague, but in its immediate neighbourhood; and he sent him full powers in form to sign, but *none to treat.* He made no modification in his ultimatum towards Austria, which was the retention of the Protectorate of the Rhine and the Hanse towns by France, to which was added Trieste, which he had formerly evinced a disposition to cede to Austria. When these were the only terms on which he was authorised to sign, it was evident that the further residence of M. de Caulaincourt at Prague was a vain formality which could lead to no result.[1]

55. Fresh effort of M. de Caulaincourt to bring about a peace.

[1] Thiers, xvi. 227-230; Caul. i. 227; Bign. xii. 247-249.

Still clinging, even in these circumstances all but desperate, to the hope of an accommodation, M. de Caulaincourt prolonged his stay for a few days longer at Koenigsal, near Prague, during which he exhibited the power to sign though not to treat, which he had at length obtained from Napoleon, and again endeavoured to bring about a separate treaty with Austria. Metternich, however, informed him, with deep regret, that it was too late for any separate treaty: the terms must be submitted to the Allied sovereigns. They were so accordingly;

56. Last proposals of Napoleon, which are rejected by the Allies.

CHAP. IX. 1813.

and the Emperor of Russia, in name of both, returned for answer, "that the Allied sovereigns, after consulting with each other, being persuaded that all idea of a real peace was inseparable from that of a general pacification, which their Majesties had hoped to have effected by the negotiations at Prague, regret to find that the articles now proposed by his Majesty the Emperor of the French cannot answer the ends in view, and therefore cannot be deemed admissible." This answer was carried by M. de Bender, the Austrian legate, to M. de Caulaincourt at the château of Koenigsal.

57. Last effort of Caulaincourt to induce Napoleon to make peace.

Even after so many repulses, Caulaincourt made one more effort to divert the Emperor from his warlike resolutions. So late as the 13th August, within two days of the resumption of hostilities, he again addressed to Napoleon a most pressing letter, in which he adjured him by every consideration for his country, his family, and himself, to return to pacific counsels, and accept the ultimatum of Austria. But nothing could bend the iron will of the Emperor. Caulaincourt, defeated in all his efforts, made no concealment to any one of his opinion as to the obstinacy of his master, and that he should have closed with the ultimatum of Austria. "In a long conversation which ensued betwen them," says Sir Charles Stewart, "General Caulaincourt told M. de Metternich that if he were Buonaparte he would accept, without hesitation, the Austrian proposals, but that he was without full power, and did not think they would be accepted by the Emperor."[1]

[1] Sir Chas. Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, Aug. 15, 1813, MS.

58. Enthusiasm of the Allies at the Austrian declaration of war. Aug. 16.

In truth, matters had now gone so far, and the preparations of Napoleon on the one side, and the enthusiasm on the other, were on such a scale, that the resumption of hostilities had become in a manner unavoidable. "It is difficult to describe," says Sir Charles Stewart, "the enthusiasm generally created by the Austrian declaration of war. The spirit of the army also was at the highest point. When the three Allied sovereigns met at Prague

on the 16th August, it excited a proud sensation in the breast of such British subjects as witnessed the event; for the persevering and energetic conduct of their own country, under the wise administration of the Prince Regent's Government, and, above all, the glorious exploits of the British army in Spain, had ultimately, and I might say exclusively, brought into action a complete and efficient alliance against the ambition of France and the tyranny of its chief, affording rational hopes of a glorious termination of the contest. The recently dubious conduct of Austria having thus terminated, she nobly and magnanimously brought her great and commanding advantages in point of numerical forces to bear; and England, with her wonted generosity, was the first to acknowledge her sincerity, and restore to her her confidence."[1]

[1] Lond. 97, 98.

59. Sir Charles Stewart's confidential conversation with Metternich. August 16.

Sir Charles Stewart arrived in Prague on the 16th August, and bore a part in the preparations for the reception of the Allied sovereigns, which took place two days after. Before this auspicious event occurred, he had a long confidential conversation with Prince Metternich, who, notwithstanding all his diplomatic reserve, knew, on proper occasions, how to expand in the charm of the most unreserved communication. The account of the interview must be given in his own words. "He began," says Sir Charles, "by detailing the course he had pursued since he had been intrusted with the reins of Government. He found the finances of the Austrian monarchy exhausted by costly and unsuccessful wars, in a state of insolvency, and the despondency of its subjects at the lowest ebb. He arranged the marriage of the Archduchess to give his country the first ascending steps from the abyss of misfortune into which it had fallen; never intending, however, when existence and power were again secured, that the marriage should influence or direct the politics of the Cabinet of Vienna. 'I persevered in my course,' he added, 'and, deaf to the

CHAP. IX. 1813.

opinions and entreaties of a powerful party, I would not stir. When the Russians, in the pursuit of Napoleon's forces, were on the Memel, I told them they must come to the Oder or the Elbe, before Austria would act. I was universally suspected, and especially in England; I know it, and was not surprised at it; but throughout I had but one object in view—to raise my country, and, through her ascendancy, give peace to the world. I know the British Cabinet always suspected me, and I do not wonder at it; but I trust I shall now stand vindicated in their eyes, and in that of posterity. I wish for nothing so much as to establish the most cordial relations between the two Courts, which I hope will be effected without delay. The last letter from the Duke of Bassano (Maret) began and ended in a most offensive tone, stating that Austria had prostituted the character of a mediator, for that to his certain knowledge she had been long in concert with the Allies, but that, nevertheless, the extreme desire of the Emperor for peace prompted him to make a last effort to get some neutral point fixed on for negotiations, even during the progress of hostilities. My deliberate answer was, that the Allies would never refuse to listen to propositions for peace, provided England and Sweden consented to them, and that they were founded on the basis of the propositions of Austria of 16th May.'" [1]

[1] Sir Chas. Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, Aug. 17, 1813, MS.; Lond. 105.

60. Grand review of the Austrian army. August 19.

The Austrian army was reviewed by the three Sovereigns, now united at Schlan, six miles from Prague, on the 19th August. "It was," says Sir Charles Stewart, "a sublime military spectacle. Ninty-one battalions of infantry and fifty squadrons of cavalry defiled before their Majesties. The battalions were on an average about 800 strong, and the infantry amounted to something more than 70,000 men. The cavalry present did not exceed 7000; the remainder of it and the light troops, about 30,000 strong, were with the advanced-guard, and were not inspected. The composition of this

army was magnificent, although I could easily perceive a great many recruits; still the system that reigned throughout, and the military air that marked the soldiers, especially the Hungarians, must ever fix it in my mind as the finest army on the Continent. The Russians may possess a more powerful soldiery, of greater physical strength and hardihood, but they cannot equal the Austrians in discipline or military air. The general officers of the latter are a superior class, and the army has a fine military tone in all its departments. To see one Austrian or Hungarian regiment is to see their whole army, for a complete equality and uniformity reign throughout; their movements were beautifully correct, and the troops seemed in the most perfect order. Twenty-four squadrons of cuirassiers and sixteen of hussars were particularly conspicuous. Among the former were the cuirassiers of the Emperor, who were presented with new standards on the occasion; and the three Sovereigns, amidst loud cheers from the troops, nailed in union their flags to the poles in front of the army, in token of their firm alliance. The enthusiasm of this moment exceeded all power of description. The artillery seemed less well appointed; the waggons and horses for their guns and trains were inferior to those of the Russians, whose artillery horses were perfect."[1] * CHAP. IX. 1813. [1] Lond. 106, 107.

61. Advance of money to the Austrians by Lord Cathcart and Sir Charles Stewart. August 18.

A great difficulty, however, existed in bringing even part of this imposing force into the field, from the extreme penury of the Austrian treasury, and the impossibility of its moving forward till from some extraneous source or another an *immediate* supply of money was obtained. In this dilemma all eyes were, as a matter of course, turned to England; but there was no time to com-

* Although, however, the Austrians exhibited this imposing array at the memorable review, and the troops looked so well when marching past, yet great part of them were raw recruits, little qualified to bear the fatigues or go through the duties of a campaign; and the Austrians really in the field during the campaign which followed never exceeded 80,000 or 90,000 men, although their official reports gave out a much larger number.—Compare CATHCART, 95, with WILSON, ii. 86, 206.

CHAP. IX. 1813.

municate with London before hostilities commenced, and although Great Britain was bound by a secret article of the treaty of Reichenbach, already mentioned, to pay Austria a subsidy of £1,000,000 sterling in the event of her commencing hostilities, yet there was no fund instantly available to make good that obligation. Lord Cathcart and Sir Charles Stewart now did the most essential service to the common cause by anticipating the decision of the home Government. They instantly arranged with Count Stadion for the immediate advance of half of the stipulated subsidy upon Austria becoming a belligerent, being £250,000, which they provided for by bills drawn on the British treasury by them, which were discounted at Berlin, and rendered instantly available. The effect of this advance, much more considerable in those countries than this, was much enhanced by the circumstance of bills appearing in circulation, drawn by the British ambassador on the treasury of their Government, and indorsed by the Austrian authorities—a practical indication of the union between the two Governments, which went far to restore the Austrian credit.[1]

[1] Sir Chas. Stewart to Lord Castlereagh, Aug. 18, 1813, MS.; Cathcart, 205, 206.

62. Difficulties about a commander-in-chief.

When Sir Charles Stewart arrived at Prague, he found the great difficulty was the appointment of a commander-in-chief for the Allied army. That unity in design and direction was indispensable, was evident to all; but it was not equally apparent in whom the supreme power was to be vested. "The Emperor Alexander," says Sir Charles, "nobly aspired to the supreme command; his personal intrepidity, perseverance, and firmness, entitle him to great consideration in this respect; and my impression is, that had Austria consented to put the whole Allied force under his command, there would have been a unity of design productive of beneficial results. The King of Prussia was not disinclined to this opinion; and the Emperor of Russia, with some assistance in the council, and General Moreau to consult with, might have been advantageously invested with the supreme command.

But Austria naturally wished, from the prominent part she had taken, and the important position she occupied, to be the arbiter of universal peace, and have the glory of her own work, and she was therefore desirous that an Austrian should have the military command. A certain degree of jealousy of Russia on political points operated against her yielding to the Emperor's wishes, and, above all, the arrival of Moreau at the Allied headquarters created discontent among the Austrians, and was one of the principal reasons why the command-in-chief was not offered to the Emperor of Russia." Impressed with the responsibility of his situation, and actuated by a noble feeling of public duty, the Emperor Alexander consented to forego the greatest object of his ambition, and the command was bestowed on the Austrian Prince Schwartzenberg.[1]

[1] Lond. 101.

63. French review.

Napoleon, on his side, before hostilities were renewed, had a grand review of his troops around headquarters. It was originally designed for his fête-day, the 15th August, on which, according to the custom of Catholic countries, his birthday was held. But as it grew near the time, it became evident to all that, at that time, they would be on the verge of hostilities, and accordingly it took place on the 10th August. Great pains were taken to give the pageant even more than the splendour usual on such occasions; and the number and appearance of the troops certainly seemed to justify the confidence which the Emperor still had in his good fortune. The King of Saxony, with his brother and nephew, assisted at the ceremony; and Napoleon, surrounded by his marshals, and followed by a brilliant staff, passed the line at the gallop, which was drawn up in the plain of Ostra Gehege, near Dresden. By his side was seen the white plume of Murat, whom the soldiers had so often followed to victory, and who at the Emperor's desire had come up from Naples to share in the triumphs which were approaching.[2] The Young and Old Guard, 48,000 strong, of whom 5000

[2] Fain, ii. 91; Thiers, xvi. 230.

CHAP. IX. 1813.

were magnificent cavaliers, struck every one by the brilliancy of their uniforms and the precision of their movements.

64. Reflections on these conferences.

When both parties were thus rapidly drifting into a decisive contest, and their secret views are now so fully known from their private correspondence, it is almost superfluous to refer to the state papers which were published on either side to vindicate their conduct, which too often justify the well-known words of Talleyrand, that the principal object of language is "to conceal the thought."[1] In the concluding manifestoes of this great debate, there were, as is usual on such occasions, some truths brought forward on both sides, and much suppressed. The Austrians were right when they asserted that the French Emperor had betrayed his determination to prosecute the war by the critical and unfounded objections in point of form which he had brought forward to postpone, till it was too late, the opening of the negotiations; and he was equally right when he answered, that they had been since February in secret communication with the Allied Powers, and that the Cabinet of Vienna was determined on war unless the terms of accommodation which they proposed were acceded to by the French Emperor. This was all true; but this was a part only of the case, and did not touch its real merits. The manifestoes kept out of view entirely the terms of peace which had been contended for on either side, and the disagreement concerning which had caused the conferences to be broken off. They did not disclose that Austria had demanded only the restoration of Prussia, the abandonment of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, the reconstruction of Prussia, the renunciation of the Protectorate of the Confederation of the Rhine, and the cession of the Illyrian provinces; and that the negotiation broke off because Napoleon refused to give up the Hanse towns or renounce that Protectorate. They did not reveal that the terms offered by Austria, after France had undergone a reverse unexampled in history,

[1] See Hist. of Europe, xii. 62-64.

left to Napoleon Belgium, Holland, and Italy, besides old France; that is, an empire more powerful than it had entered into the imagination of Louis XIV. to conceive. This was the real point at issue between the parties. The war was renewed because Napoleon could not bring himself to abandon the Hanse towns and the title of Protector of the Rhenish Confederacy. Three words, which he himself used, as expressing his determination, revealed his whole policy from first to last—"TOUT OU RIEN."

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

PRINTED BY WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS, EDINBURGH.

00020074

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 26 June, 2018